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A MANUAL OF NATURAL AND REVEALED THEOLOGY

H·W·WILLIAMS·D·D·





A MANUAL OF NATURAL AND REVEALED THEOLOGY.



A MANUAL

OF

NATURAL AND REVEALED THEOLOGY,

DESIGNED, ESPECIALLY, FOR

LOCAL PREACHERS AND SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS.

BY THE

REV. HENRY W. WILLIAMS, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "AN EXPOSITION OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS," ETC.



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PREFACE.

THE following work is designed to afford a concise but comprehensive view of the subjects included in Natural and Revealed Theology. The form and order in which these subjects are presented have approved themselves to the Author, as the result of the studies of many years; and he is not without hope that their treatment will be found to be adapted to the requirements of the present day.

It has long been his conviction that, in addition to elaborate works on Theology, there is needed a Manual of comparatively small compass, which might be used by Local Preachers and Sunday-School Teachers, in seeking to qualify themselves for their important duties. The more direct preparation for those duties is, of course, to be found in the devout and earnest study of the Holy Scriptures themselves; but it must be of great advantage to all engaged in these departments of Church-work, to have a comprehensive view of the noble science of Theology. Such a Manual the Author has endeavoured to provide.

Among the elaborate works on Theology to which allusion has been made, the Author would assign the highest place to the Rev. Dr. Pope's 'Compendium of Christian Theology,' published in three volumes, octavo; and it may be permitted to him here to express the value which he has long placed on the friendship of that profound theologian. But while the work of Dr. Pope is invaluable to Ministers and those who are studying for the ministry, it is too large and expensive for those whose wants the Author has attempted to meet.

In the quotations made from the New Testament, the *Revised Version* has been invariably followed. It would be unsuitable here to discuss the merits of that Version; but there can be little question that it presents the results of the ripest and most exact scholarship reverently directed to the faithful exhibition of the precise import of the words of the Sacred Writers. In citing passages, therefore, in support of the positions of Revealed Theology, it seemed proper uniformly to adhere to it, although in a few cases the Author would have himself preferred the rendering of the Authorised Version.

In the first Part of this Manual, which presents a condensed view of Natural Theology, the Author has been glad to enrich his pages with some striking quotations from Bishop Ellicott, Canon Liddon, the Rev. Eustace R. Conder, and Professor Wace. He would especially commend the work of Mr. Conder, entitled

'The Basis of Faith,' to the careful study of those who wish to understand the controversies of the present day, and to be assured of the firmness of the grounds on which Christian Theism reposes.

H. W. WILLIAMS.

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ST. JOHN'S WOOD, LONDON.
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PART I.

NATURAL THEOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.

RELIGION—THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS WHICH IT SUPPOSES.

THE human mind has, in every age, turned to a Power above it, recognising, with greater or less distinctness, its dependence on a First Cause, its responsibility to a Moral Ruler, and often seeking, amidst the changes and conscious dissatisfaction of earth, repose and blessedness in communion with the Divine. It is scarcely too much to say that there is an instinctive feeling of religion, which manifests itself in various modes, under the diverse circumstances of culture in which men are found. But while this religious feeling is, to some extent, vague and imperfect where the light of revelation does not shine, it becomes distinct and powerful where that light is welcomed, and the great Object of religion is apprehended in His glorious perfections and His relations to mankind.

But, passing from the instinctive feeling of religion, let us consider the nature of religion. It is obvious that it includes some *knowledge* of God, not, indeed, complete and perfect knowledge, for that is beyond the powers of any finite intellect, but still an apprehension, more or less correct and comprehensive, of His nature, His attributes, His government, and His relations to His creatures. On this knowledge the mind, in proportion as it is actuated by religious feeling, dwells with deep interest. All its habits of thought are moulded by a recognition of God and the principles of His government. But knowledge alone, however correct and extensive, is not religion. There must be the going forth of the heart towards God in those exercises of submission, reve-

rence, trust, and love which His character demands. Religion implies a certain state of *the affections* assiduously cultivated and practically manifested. And while God Himself is primarily and directly the Object of the religious affections, the recognition of His relation to the whole family of man will cause the mind that cherishes these affections to regard with interest all around it, observing towards them those principles of justice, truth, and kindness which are pleasing to Him. Hence religion, while it has its seat in the soul itself, will naturally lead to, and may be said, indeed, to embrace, a course of *practical obedience to the Divine will*, and the faithful observance of the duties which devolve upon us in the several relations in which we stand.

Any theory, then, which would make religion consist exclusively in knowledge, feeling, or conduct, is essentially defective. Religion implies the three things in combination,—the knowledge of God, the reverent, confiding, submissive love of God, and a course of obedience to His will. Canon Liddon has properly remarked, 'Religious life is more than feeling, since feeling may be physical, misdirected, selfish. It is more than knowledge, which, even if it be complete and accurate, may fail to govern the moral nature. It is more than obedience to a moral code, because such obedience, if sufficiently complete to be religious, already implies relations to the Lawgiver. And yet religion is feeling; it is mental illumination; it is especially moral effort; because it is that which implies, and comprehends, and combines them all. It is the sacred bond, freely accepted, generously, enthusiastically, persistently welcomed, whereby the soul engages to make a continuous expenditure of its highest powers in attaching itself to the Personal Source and Object of its being. It is the tie by which the soul binds itself to God, its true Friend.'*

The nature of religion having thus been considered, it becomes us next to inquire into the *fundamental truths* which it supposes, viewing them, in the first instance, apart from the

* 'Some Elements of Religion,' Lect. I., pp. 20, 21.

discoveries of revelation. It is not, indeed, contended that these truths were, in the first instance, reasoned out by the human mind, left altogether to its own resources. The history of our race suggests a different conclusion; and surely, assuming the existence of an intelligent Author of nature and Ruler of mankind, there is no antecedent improbability in His revealing Himself to men, but very much to suggest that He would do so. Bishop Butler, in the first Part of his invaluable work, which treats of the Analogy of Natural Religion to the constitution and course of Nature, expressly guards against the supposition that the truths which it embraces were originally discovered by human reasoning. 'As there is no hint or intimation in history,' he says, 'that this system was first reasoned out; so there is express historical or traditional evidence, as ancient as history, that it was taught first by revelation.'* In the second Part of his work he reverts to the subject:—'There does not appear the least intimation in history or tradition, that religion was first reasoned out; but the whole of history and tradition makes for the other side, that it came into the world by revelation.'†

Again, it is not assumed that every man may *now* reason out for himself the great fundamental truths which lie at the basis of religion; but only that the nature of man and the constitution of the world around us really afford sufficient ground for the acceptance and firm belief of these truths, even independently of revelation. We may again quote the words of Bishop Butler:—'It is impossible to say who would have been able to have reasoned out that whole system which we call natural religion, in its genuine simplicity, clear of superstition; but there is certainly no ground to affirm that the generality could: if they could, there is no sort of probability that they would.'‡

What, then, are the fundamental truths of natural religion? They are the existence of God, the spiritual nature of man,

* 'Analogy,' Part I., ch. vi. † 'Analogy,' Part II., ch. ii.
‡ 'Analogy,' Part II., ch. i.

the fact that we are placed under a moral administr
and a future state of rewards and punishments. Thes
the subjects which we propose first to consider, reg
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and by the world around us; and then we may advan
the clearer and ampler discoveries of the Christian revelat

CHAPTER II.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD—THE ARGUMENT FROM THE GENERAL CONSENT OF MANKIND, AND FROM THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNIVERSE.

THE primary truth of religion is the existence of God,—the living Personal God, who stands in most intimate relations to us, and, indeed, to the whole universe of being. What is the evidence, we have to ask, apart from revelation, on which this truth reposes?

In replying to this, we would put aside that which has been termed the *à priori* argument, as wholly inconclusive and unsatisfactory. It is surely not for us to attempt to demonstrate by antecedent considerations the necessity of the Divine existence. We must rest on other proofs suggested by our experience and observation.

One of these is *the common consent of mankind.* The fact of this consent has sometimes been called in question; and it must be admitted that there have been some, in almost every age, who have denied the existence of an intelligent and almighty Author of nature. But the instances are comparatively rare; and even when there has not been a distinct apprehension of God in His essential perfections, there has been an impression of a Power above us on which we are dependent. Bishop Ellicott, in his valuable little work entitled 'Six Addresses on the Being of God,' has quoted the following passage from a distinguished man of science, M. de Quatrefages:—'Obliged, in my course of instruction, to review all human races, I have sought atheism in the lowest

as well as the highest; I have nowhere met with it, except in individuals, or in more or less limited schools, such as those which existed in Europe in the last century, or which may still be seen at the present day.' *

Assuming, then, as we are authorised to do, that the human mind is so constituted that it readily embraces, and even turns to, the idea of God, let us reflect on the evidential value of this fact. We do not put it forward as of itself conclusive; but we contend that it possesses great weight, and should not be lightly passed over by any serious inquirer into this great subject. Canon Liddon properly remarks, 'The idea or presentiment of God, everywhere rooted in the mind of man, is a fact sufficiently important to be treated as something better than a superstition by those who put forward any serious doctrine about human nature. A mental fact is as worthy of attention as any fact which can be appraised in a chemical laboratory or on the roof of an observatory. Cicero's statement that there is no nation so barbarous and wild as not to have believed in some divinity, is still, notwithstanding certain apparent exceptions, true. A nation of pure atheists is yet to be discovered. Unworthy and degraded as are many of the beliefs on the subject of a Higher Power that are to be found in the heathen world, some groping after the great Unseen, some tentative intuition, some shadowy belief there is to be found always and everywhere. Man thinks of a Higher Power as naturally as he thinks of the world around him, or of himself. . . . The spontaneous activity of his consciousness brings with it, contains in itself, the thought of ONE who is greater, if not also stronger, wiser, better than all else; and that man should thus think of Him is of itself a presumption that He really exists.' †

From this consideration we pass to the argument founded on *the existence and general constitution of the universe around us*, and of which we form a part. Three questions, as Bishop

* Address II., p. 45.

† 'Some Elements of Religion,' Lecture II., pp. 49—51.

Ellicott has pointed out, force themselves on our attention. The first is, What was the beginning of the material world? 'In the case of this earth,' he remarks, 'science is now ever more and more distinctly presenting to us the idea of a beginning of its existence, and that, too, at a time by no means so boundlessly remote as it was once the habit of philosophy to assume. And this consideration, in the present position of the general argument, and especially in connection with the subject of Efficient Causation, will be found to be of the most serious moment. If there be a real beginning, the question at once arises, How, by whom, or by what, did that beginning take place? It must have been by an agency external to what was begun. There must have been something that gave the first start; for of all truths this is the most certain and indisputable, that in the realm of the inorganic world there is no such thing as self-originated force, any more than there is self-originated motion. The more distinctly that science demonstrates that, however far we may go backward, we must still come to a definite movement which must be called a beginning, the more distinctly does the question press itself home upon the mind—What was the true and efficient cause of that beginning? How did it originate? The difficulty of the question is not in the slightest degree removed, nay, it is not even attenuated, by tracing back the history of matter to its earliest and most primordial condition. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, the general truth of the nebular hypothesis; let us suppose that we have gone backward into the depths of the eternity *a parte ante*, and are contemplating the primordial state, not of our solar system only, but of the whole material universe; and let us suppose that we find it to be that which science frequently assumes it to have been,—highly diffused yet homogeneous nebulosity. Of this we are told there are decided scientific indications. . . . Well, and what then? Why this,—that if there is to be any connection between that past and this present, some action must have taken place, however rudimental, which initiated change, and gave the first impulse to that primary

condensation or concentration out of which we are to conceive that heat was evolved, and by which new material and dynamical relations were originated among the constituent parts. Reason as we may, we can never escape from the principles which our own minds force upon us. However subtly, or, it may be, unconsciously, we may assume the moving principle, whether by postulating gravitation, attraction, or any other mode of starting initial movement, a careful examination of terms will always show that it *has been* assumed in some part of our premises. There will often be detected in our language just the implied push, pull, or squeeze, which was all that we may have lacked to start our universe, and by the tacit assumption of which we were unconsciously trying to obliterate that which is ineffaceable,—a beginning.' *

Then there are two other questions. How did *life* originate? It must have had a beginning; and it is now generally admitted, as a result of scientific investigation, that it cannot have proceeded from non-living matter. And the third question is, How did *mind* originate? Let us endeavour vividly to realise the powers of self-conscious mind, as possessed by man,—its powers of reflection, of memory, of varied emotion, and especially of will; and it will appear impossible that it was brought into existence or developed from unconscious matter. This, at least, is certain, that while its origination by a Personal God, possessed of infinite intelligence, of all right affections, and of volition directing and giving effect to infinite resources, meets all the requirements of the case, every other supposition is insufficient and unsatisfactory. We may again quote from Bishop Ellicott:—'The only force, as has been justly said, which is directly given and immediately known to us, is our own will-force; our knowledge of all other forces is mediate, and by logical inference. What then is there unreasonable in saying, that, in passing from what we know to what we don't know, and in seeking for the Efficient Cause of all things with such light as we have at our disposal, the most natural idea we

* 'Six Addresses on the Being of God,' Address III., pp. 59—64.

can form is of an all-powerful Will, or, in more simple terms, of an all-powerful Being with whom to will is to execute? Such a conception not only helps us to understand the beginning of the universe, especially when under the form in which we have already considered it, but also gives some reasonable account and explanation of the two other beginnings—viz., of life and mind, both of which, as we have seen, are to be accounted for.' *

* 'Address III.,' pp. 75, 76.

CHAPTER III.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD—THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN AS EVINCED THROUGHOUT NATURE.

WE have already considered the presumptive evidence of the existence of an Almighty Creator and Ruler afforded by the common consent of mankind; and the argument which may be legitimately founded on the existence and constitution of the universe around us, and of which we form a part. The beginning of material nature, the beginning of life, and the beginning of mind, can only be satisfactorily accounted for by referring them to a Supreme Mind, with whom is the fountain of life, and from whom all intelligence proceeds.

But the argument for the being of a Personal God becomes clearer and stronger, when we contemplate the manifold evidences of *design* which meet us on every hand in the structure and arrangements of the universe, and in our own constitution. This argument has, of late, been disparaged; but it has been successfully vindicated by some of the ablest thinkers, and it commends itself to the common sense of every thoughtful mind. Even were the hypothesis of evolution admitted, it would not set aside the proof of a designing Mind afforded by the whole system of nature. Were it even granted, to use the words of one of the most distinguished exponents of that theory, 'that the whole world, living and not living, is the result of the mutual interaction, according to definite laws, of the forces possessed by the molecules of which the primitive nebulosity of the universe was composed,' the question would still remain, Who originated these forces, who impressed on them the laws

according to which they have acted, so as to bring about the wonderful arrangements and adaptations that surround us? Everywhere the evidences of design are presented to us; and these naturally and necessarily point us to a designing Mind.

In contemplating the universe, as far as we know it, and more particularly in contemplating the world in which we live, we find several general features that claim our attention. Bishop Ellicott, in the work already referred to, has specified the following:—First, *Order* of the strictest kind and most definite proportions, has been wrought into the very structure of the world; and, as one illustration of this, he mentions that 'every atom of every substance of the earth has its ordered numerical relations under which, and under which alone, it will combine with the atoms that lie around.' In the second place, we recognise the prevalence of *Law*, of fixed and definite modes according to which the processes of nature go forward. Thirdly, it becomes us to mark the *Harmony* resulting 'amidst an infinite web of infinitely complicated laws.' But this harmony is consistent with *Progress*,—progress by development. And then, especially, we meet everywhere with instances of *Adaptation*,—the adaptation of organ to function in the whole domain of living things. And, finally, there is the feature of *Beauty*, which so strikingly characterises many of the arrangements of this earth, ministering a refined pleasure to the thoughtful mind.

The Rev. Eustace R. Conder, in his invaluable work entitled 'The Basis of Faith,' has traced out this argument at great length, and has supplied numerous and striking illustrations of the leading particulars which it embraces. The extent and amplitude of the evidence are beautifully set forth in the following passage:—'The marks of design, or, to speak more plainly, the cases of harmonious adjustment tending to produce order, life, beauty, and happiness, pervade the whole universe; from the planetary orbits (ruled by laws whose field of operation outstretches our perception and even fancy) to the waves of light and heat, of which several hundred millions of millions

paint the retina or warm the cheek in a second; from the solar mass to a midge's wing or a mite's eye. The proofs multiply as our knowledge grows, assuring us that its widest range will never discover any token of their possible exhaustion. It follows that in any attempt to overtake and estimate the evidence as a whole, our intellect is strained and bewildered. A selection of examples must be made; and whether they be chosen as familiar and intelligible, or as complicated and astonishing, or on any other principle, injustice is unavoidably done to the evidence, or rather to the mind contemplating it. We fall under an unconscious but irresistible temptation to feel as if we had before us *the* evidence of the Divine existence, or at all events, a strong and favourable sample; whereas the most beautiful or striking examples owe their real value to the fact that their testimony is backed up by that of the universe, explored or unexplored. We do but catch some sparkles from the spray of the great tide of human knowledge: how little idea can these give us of the fathomless, shoreless ocean of which that tide is but a transient wave!'*

The work of Mr. Conder deserves to be carefully studied; and no selections from it can do justice to its powerful reasoning, or to the noble eloquence which characterises many portions of it. He dwells on the several particulars referred to by Bishop Ellicott, and adds the subserviency of the arrangements of nature to *Moral Purpose*. His remarks on *Adaptation* are peculiarly comprehensive. He calls attention to three distinct kinds of adaptation: first, 'adaptation of structure to function, and of both structure and function to the growth, perfecting, and reproduction of an organised whole; secondly, adaptation of the finished product to manifold uses, more especially to the use and enjoyment of man; and thirdly, of the universe as a whole and in its parts to organic life.' Referring to this last class of adaptations he says, 'The indications of design are not merely painted upon the surface and woven in the texture of all that lives, plant or animal. They pervade inorganic

* Second Edition. Lecture IV., pp. 135, 136.

nature. They are recorded as in secret cipher on its invisible atoms. They breathe in the air. They distil in the dew. They are graven in the rock for ever.'*

It is beyond the design of this work to enter into detailed illustrations of the several branches of the argument that has now been sketched. But there are two familiar examples of exquisite adaptation, subserving the most important purposes of human life, which may be briefly adverted to,—those afforded by the structure of the human eye and ear. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the former is the power which it possesses of adapting itself to the distance of the objects to which it is directed, and which the mind wishes to perceive. It has been properly said, that nothing like this self-adaptive power is possessed by any handiwork of man. Indeed, the structure of the eye, so complex and beautiful, evinces throughout a wisdom which can only belong to an infinite mind. So, too, the human ear has been formed for the nicest discrimination of sound, so that as we listen to the conversation and discourse of others, we can not only apprehend their meaning, but can perceive from their tones, to some extent, the emotions which actuate them.

Everywhere, indeed, throughout nature, we meet with manifest proofs of design. But design implies a designer. 'Purpose,' it has been properly said, 'is the autograph of mind'; and thus, as we survey the arrangements of nature, we are led upward in reverent thought to HIM who has formed the whole, and whose living, ever-active agency sustains it and carries on its processes.

* Lecture IV. pp. 150, 159, 160.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD—THE ARGUMENT FROM THE MORAL NATURE OF MAN.

IN the preceding Chapter we have dwelt on the evidence of the existence of God afforded by the arrangements of external nature, since these indicate the action of a designing Mind. But it becomes us also to look within,—to reflect on the constitution and working of our own minds. It would, we conceive, be perfectly legitimate to found an argument on the lofty intellectual powers of the human mind; for the only consistent view is that which refers them to Him who is the Fountain of life, intelligence, and energy. But the argument which we now wish to urge is that founded on *the moral nature of man.*

There is, we maintain, a principle in the human breast, antecedently to the special influences of training and education, which recognises the *reality* of the distinctions of *right* and *wrong.* This principle, which we designate conscience, enforces also our *obligation* to do that which is right and to avoid that which is wrong. There is the conviction of *duty;* and if we deliberately neglect or violate duty,—unless conscience has been blunted and depraved by repeated acts of resistance to its dictates,—there is a feeling of *self-condemnation*, while if we do that which is right, especially at the sacrifice of personal ease or advantage, we have a feeling of *moral satisfaction* and *approval.*

Now we do not affirm, that conscience, independently of all instruction from without, is capable of tracing out with accuracy the whole system of duty. To do this, it needs to be enlightened and trained by revelation: but it does recognise

that right and wrong are realities; it does affirm that we *ought* to do certain things, and that we *ought* to abstain from others. And that feeling of satisfaction which is connected with right-doing, and the feeling of self-reproach which follows the wilful and glaring violation of right, stand connected, more or less distinctly, with the consciousness of *responsibility*,—responsibility to a Higher Power.

In confirmation of these sentiments, we may quote the following remarks of Professor Wace, in his Bampton Lectures on 'The Foundations of Faith.' Speaking of the action of conscience, he says, 'It is not simply that certain things are recognised as right, and certain other things as wrong. It is not even the paramount conviction that to do the right and to refuse the wrong is the duty and the highest honour of man. It is not, in fact, simply a sense of duty which is aroused by the voice of the conscience. It is a sense and a conviction that there exists a sanction for that duty, and that a violation of it will be surely avenged. . . . This is not simply a vision of moral beauty, a conviction of the supreme claim of morality upon our reason and our allegiance. It is this, no doubt; but it is much more. It is a conviction that in ourselves and in others this claim will be enforced. We feel that it will be enforced, moreover, in the way of judgment, and not merely in that of natural consequences. The warning of conscience is thus something distinct in kind from the conviction that fire will burn if we put our hands into it, or that if we disregard the law of gravitation we shall suffer for it. In those cases the consequence is visible and immediate; but it is the characteristic of conscience to warn a man of a future judgment even when he escapes all visible penalty. The conviction it enforces is not merely that certain consequences will follow our evil deeds, but that we deserve certain penalties, and that we must expect them to be inflicted because we deserve them. It is a conviction, in other words, that we are responsible, and that we shall be held to our responsibility.'*

* Lecture II., pp. 35—37.

Thus the existence of conscience indicates that we are living under a system of *moral government*, the leading feature of which is *retribution*. But if this is so, if there is a moral system on which this world is governed, we are naturally led to think of ONE who presides over it, who loves the right and will enforce its claims. The human conscience points to GOD, as the Sovereign and Judge to whom we are responsible, and who will uphold the interests of righteousness and truth.

In the arguments that have been alleged for the existence of God, we have not attempted to trace out the glorious perfections which are essential to His nature. Some of them have been incidentally alluded to; but, as we shall hereafter see, the clear and full development of them is supplied only by revelation. It is to this we are indebted for those views of God which are of the deepest interest to us, as bringing Him near to us in our daily life, and as opening to us access to Him under all our conflicts and sorrows; and it is this which relieves, to a large extent, the dark shadows which the mystery of evil has cast over our world. But the inquiries in which we have engaged have led us to the conclusion that there is a self-existing Being, the Author and Sustainer of universal nature, and the Moral Ruler of the world, possessed of infinite power and wisdom, and distinguished also by the love of righteousness and by hatred to that which is wrong.

To this adorable Being our hearts should turn with reverence and submission; and, it is our privilege to add, with trust also and love. Passing, for a moment, beyond the bounds of Natural Theology, and anticipating some of the disclosures of revelation, we may conclude this Chapter with the eloquent appeal of Canon Liddon:—'Nothing among created things that can engage and stimulate thought, nothing that can expand and warm affection, nothing that can invigorate will and purpose, ought, in the judgment of any thinking human being, to compete with the Eternal God. Our reasonable duty towards God is "to believe in Him, to fear Him, and to love Him, with all the heart, with all the mind, with all the soul, and with all

the strength." What, then, is He, our God, to us? Do we thirst for God? As the days, and months, and years pass, do we ever look out of and beyond ourselves upon that vast ocean of uncreated life which encircles us, which penetrates our inmost selves? Do we ever think steadily, so as to dwell with a real intellectual interest upon Him who is the first and highest of truths, to whose free bounty we ourselves owe the gift of existence, and to Whom we must one day account for our use of it? Do we ever sincerely desire to love Him and to live for Him? Or are we constantly hurrying along our solitary path from one vanishing shape towards another, while we neglect the Alone Unchangeable? Be sure that, if we will, in God revealed in Christ the soul may slake the thirst of the ages; and the dreariest, and darkest, and most restless existence may find illumination and peace. "This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide unto death and beyond it." . . . Without this Awful and Blessed Being man has no adequate object, even during these days of his brief earthly existence; his thought, his affection, his purpose spring up and are exercised only that they may presently waste and die. With God the human soul not merely interprets the secrets of the universe; it comprehends, and is at peace with, itself. For God is the satisfaction of its thirst; He is the Object of religion.' *

* 'Some Elements of Religion,' Lecture II., pp. 79, 80.

CHAPTER V.

THE PERSONALITY OF MAN—A FUTURE LIFE.

NEXT in importance to the great truth of the existence of God, is the true nature of man. All of us are deeply interested in the question, whether, in addition to our bodily organisation, so complex and so wonderfully adapted to the purposes of our earthly life, we possess a *mind*—a *spirit*—which is capable of conscious existence when the body dies, and whether such an existence does indeed await us.

In entering upon these inquiries, apart from the discoveries of revelation, we have first to ponder carefully the powers of the human mind. Of these our own consciousness assures us; while our observation of other men, and our study of the records of history, may illustrate the lofty attainments of which the human mind is capable, and the resources which it may command.

Now it must be obvious that we not only have certain sensations and certain instinctive tendencies in common with the inferior animals, but we can *think*, *reflect*, and *reason*. To some extent, perhaps, some of the more sagacious of the living creatures around us can do this; but man can pursue lengthened trains of thought, can recall and reason upon the events of former ages, handed down in writing; and thus successive generations of men can enjoy the advantage of the culture, discoveries, and attainments of those that have preceded them. Then, again, the human mind is capable of deep, pure, and ennobling *affections*. We are often touched with the affection evinced by some of the inferior animals towards their young; but this affection seems to be connected with animal instincts and certain physical states; and as time elapses, and the physical state changes, the affection disappears, and in some

instances is even changed to aversion. But the human mind is capable of life-long attachments, and those attachments pure and unselfish. So, too, it is capable of *devotion*. It may rise not only to the knowledge of God,—though that knowledge must ever be partial and imperfect,—but to a reverent, confiding, submissive love to Him, and may consciously devote life to the accomplishment of His purposes, and the showing forth of His glory.

But, especially, the human mind is possessed of *will*. It can decide between different courses of action suggested to it; it can consciously put forth its powers in one direction or another; and it can influence, to some extent, the state of things around. By a simple act of will, calling into exercise and directing its physical energies, or by means of speech influencing the actions of others, the mind can exert a force which may modify or alter the course of events.

Now when we thoughtfully contemplate the powers of the human mind, we can scarcely suppose that they belong to mere matter,—that they are the result of material organisation, however exquisite and refined. We may refer especially to the power of *will*. If matter may be said to act at all, it acts according to certain laws, certain fixed and definite modes. Let us think, for a moment, of the action of those organs of the human body which are not under the control of the will. The heart, for instance, beats according to the laws impressed on it, and is incapable of controlling or modifying its own operation. But the human mind can exercise such a control over its own working. It can concentrate its attention on a given subject, or turn away from that subject; it can put forth its powers of thought with intensity or with remissness; and it can choose between different courses of action. The self-conscious, self-determining mind of man clearly possesses qualities and powers which cannot attach to mere matter.

There is another consideration which seems conclusively to show that man possesses an immaterial principle—a spirit—which, though now it uses the physical organisation as its medium of perception and action, is yet, in its own nature,

distinct from it. It is now established, as an indisputable fact, that the body is undergoing continual change; so that, after the lapse of several years, it does not retain any of the substance of which it consisted at the commencement of the period. *But the mind remains the same.* Our own consciousness assures us of its identity; and it is as impossible for an individual to doubt that he is the same person who in childhood and youth performed certain actions and cherished certain affections, the traces of which are still left on the memory, as it is for him to doubt the fact of his existence.

Man, then, is possessed of *personality* in the strict and proper sense; while the moral character which, as we have seen, belongs to his principles and actions stamps upon his nature an unspeakable value and importance.

And this points us to *a future life.* It cannot, indeed, be absolutely inferred from the immateriality of the human mind, that it must necessarily survive the stroke which terminates its connection with the body; but that consideration affords a strong presumption that it will do so. And when we connect with this the fact that we are moral agents, and are living under a moral constitution the leading feature of which is retribution,—for the warnings and premonitions of conscience assure us that retribution awaits us,—our thoughts are naturally carried forward to a future state. Here the awards of this moral constitution are imperfect and partial. Some great criminals escape detection, and some who have outraged the dearest interests of their fellow-men live in ease and luxury; while others who have pursued a course of self-denying benevolence are permitted outwardly to suffer, though the consciousness of well-doing tends to bring repose and satisfaction to their minds. But there is that within us which inspires the conviction that the awards of this moral constitution will ultimately correspond perfectly to the character and conduct of men; and as we devoutly recognise HIM who has established it, and who presides over it, we cannot but believe that He 'will render to every man according to his works.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE IMPERFECTIONS OF NATURAL THEOLOGY.

THE conclusions to which we have been led by the reasonings of the preceding Chapters are of vital interest to every human being. Apart from the explicit teaching of revelation, we have seen sufficient grounds for inferring the existence of God, the personality of man, a system of moral government under which man is placed, and a future life of rewards and punishments.

But while the conclusions of Natural Theology are of great value, they are necessarily imperfect and defective. Difficulties and perplexities meet us on every hand; and the deepest anxieties of the human spirit—those arising from the consciousness of guilt—are not relieved by anything which nature suggests. To some of the imperfections of Natural Theology our attention must now be directed.

The character of God must be a subject of intense interest to every one that is assured of His existence and His government of man. The universe around us, the structure of our own bodies, and the faculties of our minds sufficiently evince His power, His wisdom, and His infinite resources; while the actings of conscience show us that He who has formed the mind, and who presides over the moral constitution under which we are placed, loves that which is right, and is opposed to everything that is wrong in character and conduct. Still further, in the constitution of nature there are so many indications of benevolent intention, so many arrangements obviously designed to minister to the enjoyment of sentient

beings, and especially to the happiness of man, that we are justified in attributing to the Author of nature the attribute of goodness. But then, on the other hand, we are met by the facts of pain, and disease, and death; while the prevalence of moral evil is calculated to fill the thoughtful mind with gloom and sadness. Revelation only can solve the mysteries which surround us, and present to us both the goodness and the holiness of God in a clear and affecting light.

Again, while some leading duties devolving upon us are suggested by the considerations which Natural Theology supplies, these considerations do not suffice to unfold to us the whole scheme of duty, as resulting from all the relations in which we stand to God and to each other. Conscience tells us of our *obligation* to do that which is *right*: under its actings we feel that we *ought* to cherish certain feelings and to perform certain actions, as well as to resist other feelings and abstain from other actions. But conscience needs to be trained and educated in order to the formation of anything approaching to a perfect human character. Our duty to God cannot be fully apprehended unless we understand His character, know the several relations in which we stand to Him, and are acquainted with the nature of the worship which He approves. The duties which result from the manifold relations which human society embraces need also to be clearly set forth. Conscience affirms the general principle that we should be just to our fellow-men, and that while malignity in all its manifestations is wrong, benevolence is right and lovely. But the application of these and kindred principles to all the relations and circumstances of human life requires ample moral teaching, and that teaching distinct and authoritative.

Still further, there are many questions of deep interest as to the Divine government of our world on which Natural Theology sheds only a dim and imperfect light. Does God indeed care for individual men with a Father's care and love? Is He accessible in prayer? Will He interpose to succour and bless those who put their trust in Him, and who seek to

do His will? These are questions which come home to the human heart, and touch its deepest interests. But revelation only can give to them a distinct and conclusive answer. Nothing which nature suggests could assure us that everything that affects us is an object of interest to the Eternal God, and that He listens to the feeblest breathings of the heart that turns to Him with reverence, and trust, and love.

But, more especially, the dark mystery of the prevalence of moral evil throughout our world needs, for its solution, much more than Natural Theology can supply. We can, indeed, understand that sin originated in the revolt of the creaturely will against the authority of God; but there are many questions connected with its wide and universal diffusion with which the human mind cannot, of itself, grapple. And when the conscience is oppressed with the sense of personal guilt, the inquiry becomes one of awful interest, Can sin be pardoned, and its penal consequences be arrested? To this question nature returns no satisfactory answer,—none, at least, that can give confidence or even a lively hope to the troubled mind. In this life the consequences of evil actions are often irreversible: no tears of penitence can wash out the stains of guilt, no remorse can undo the effects of wrong and injurious conduct. And had we no disclosure of a Divine scheme of mercy, providing for the upholding of the essential principles of the Divine government, and yet welcoming the return of the sinner who is willing to abandon and confess his sins, a dark and impenetrable cloud must have rested upon the position and prospects of the guilty and polluted. But here the Christian revelation comes in to banish our gloom, and to open to us the path of life. While it pours a flood of light on many other subjects which Natural Theology only imperfectly sets forth, or in reference to which it leaves us in painful suspense, it is especially precious as unfolding to us the mediatorial scheme, and assuring us of the readiness of God to pardon, and sanctify, and save, all who come in penitence and faith to the Incarnate Son.



PART II.

THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION: ITS GENERAL CHARACTER AND LEADING EVIDENCES.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTIANITY AN HISTORICAL RELIGION—ITS CREDENTIALS—ITS RELATION TO PREPARATORY SYSTEMS.

CHRISTIANITY is essentially an historical religion. Its truths, its promises, its hopes, all gather round the Person and work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; its precepts are enforced by His authority; and its institutions rest on His declared will. He claims to be the Anointed of God, the Revealer of the Father, the Lawgiver and Sovereign of the Mediatorial kingdom, and the Arbiter of the eternal destinies of men. He claims to be the INCARNATE SON OF GOD, and the Saviour of mankind. The question, then, which now arises is, How are these lofty claims attested?

The appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ among men, and the great facts of His life, and ministry, and death, and resurrection, are established by the most conclusive historical evidence. It would be more reasonable to doubt that Julius Cæsar ever lived, or that William the Conqueror invaded England and became its sovereign, than that the Lord Jesus lived upon this earth. The former of the persons now referred to largely influenced the destinies of Rome; and the success of the latter has left its impress on all the subsequent history of our country. But the life and death of Jesus have influenced, and to a large extent moulded, the history of our race from the time of His appearance. The facts of His earthly career are recorded in our four Gospels, to which we now appeal simply as historical records, the genuineness and authenticity of which are established by evidence similar to that by which the genuineness of other

ancient writings is proved. The fact of His being put to death under the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate is referred to by the Roman historian Tacitus; while the usages of the early Christians, the large numbers who had embraced the faith of Jesus, and the devoted regard which they paid to Him, are dwelt upon by the younger Pliny, in his letter to the Emperor Trajan, written about seventy years after the Saviour's death. It is an important consideration, also, that the great and essential facts of the Redeemer's history are distinctly recognised and affirmed by St. Paul in those Epistles the genuineness of which has not been called in question by even the boldest rationalistic critics,—the Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians. Still further, these facts are attested by the existence of the Christian Church with its peculiar institutions. We can trace back the history of the Church to the very time of the Apostles; and we have a series of Christian writers from that time to the present, all of whom appeal to the evangelical narratives and other Sacred Writings of the New Testament as recognised and authoritative. Nor should we, in particular, overlook the fact, that two of the peculiar institutions of Christianity, the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day, bear testimony to the two greatest facts of Christianity,—the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Assuming, then, simply the historical credibility of the Christian records, and the reality of the facts which they affirm, we come to the question, How are the claims of the Lord Jesus attested?

Now the first fact that meets us in this inquiry is, that His coming had been *prepared for*. Christianity did not burst suddenly upon the world. The Jewish people had subsisted for many ages, separated from the rest of mankind by their national usages, by an elaborate ritual system prescribed in the writings which they held sacred, and cherishing as their dearest hope the expectation of the advent of the Messiah who had been foretold in those writings. We do not enter here upon the proof of the Divine authority of the Mosaic institute, or of the

inspiration of the Sacred Books of the Jewish Church. These questions will come up in a later stage of our argument. Now we fix attention simply on the existence of the Jewish Church, with its peculiar institutions and services, and with its collection of Sacred Writings. In estimating the claims of the Lord Jesus, it is important to bear in mind that He appeared as the Prophet for whose coming this system of preparations had been made. And it is an interesting thought, that the greatest exponent of Christianity, next to our Lord Himself, commences his most elaborate doctrinal Epistle with a reference to the pre-announcement of the Christian economy in the earlier Scriptures:—'Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, which He promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead, even Jesus Christ our Lord' (Rom. i. 1—4).

We affirm, then, that in the Person, the ministry, the life, the death, the resurrection, and the present mediatorial glory of the Lord Jesus, the predictions of the ancient Scriptures respecting the Messiah had their accomplishment. While He did not realise the hopes, or conciliate the prejudices, of the Jewish people of His own day, He was shown to be the Messiah by the fulfilment in Him of the varied announcements of their Sacred Writings. To some of these announcements we may now advert.

The intimations of the prophetic Scriptures threw light on the *circumstances* of the Redeemer's advent. He was to be a descendant of Abraham in the line of Isaac and Jacob, and to spring from the tribe of Judah before the sceptre should finally depart from it (Gen. xlix. 10). He was to be of the royal line of David, but was to arise when that family should be in a state of lowliness and depression (2 Sam. vii. 18, 19; Isa. xi. 1). He was to be born in Bethlehem Ephratah; and to appear while the second temple was yet standing (Micah v. 2; Haggai

ii. 3—9). And it was predicted that He who was to redeem men should be born of a virgin mother (Isa. vii. 14).

This last announcement was intimately connected with the intimations of prophecy respecting the *peculiar dignity of the Messiah's Person*. While it was affirmed that He should be a partaker of our nature, that He should come into this world in all the lowliness of infancy, and should grow up without any external glory to attract the careless and worldly, it was also implied that He should be the Mighty God, the Eternal One, the Son manifested among men, and that the government which He should exercise should be uninterrupted and universal (Isa. ix. 6, 7; Psalm ii. 7, 8, 12; xlv. 6, 7; cx. 1—3; Micah v. 2—4; Zech. xiii. 7; Mal. iii. 1).

The prophetic declarations cherished by the Jewish Church shed light also on the character of the Messiah's *ministry*. That ministry was to be distinguished by its *authority*. He was to issue laws which should bind the consciences of men, and to which even distant nations should bow with lowly reverence (Deut. xviii. 18, 19; Isa. lxii. 4). His teaching was to pour a flood of *light* on all the subjects which most deeply affect the welfare of our race; and it was to be especially distinguished by its *tenderness* and *condescension*, and by the clear and affecting manner in which it should lay open to the contrite sinner the way of *deliverance* and *peace* (Isa. xi. 2; xlii. 1—3; xlix. 6, 8, 9; lxi. 1—3).

But the Messiah was represented, also, under another character. He was to be *the Priest* of His people,—'a Priest after the order of Melchisedek'; He was to offer up Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice, *taking the place of the guilty*, and *suffering for the iniquities of men;* and then, having risen from the dead, He was to ascend to His glory, and to carry on His priestly mediation in the heavenly sanctuary (Psalm cx. 1—4; Isa. liii). He was to be treated with contempt and scorn by those who should have acknowledged His claims, and whose position in the visible Church should give them extensive influence. He was to be 'the stone set at nought by the builders,' but con-

stituted, by the signal interposition of Jehovah, 'the head of the corner' (Psalm cxviii. 22, 23). But this was not all. He was to be 'smitten of God,' oppressed in spirit with a hidden sorrow, appointed by the Eternal Father, as He bore the burden of the world's iniquities (Isa. liii. 3—8; Zech. xiii. 7). But as the result of His submission to a death of violence and ignominy, as the Representative of our guilty race, He was to rise to a new and glorious life, and to dispense to His believing people the richest blessings of salvation (Isa. liii. 10—12).

The intimations of prophecy disclosed, also, the peculiar features of the Messiah's *administration* as *the Sovereign of His people and the world.* He was to be emphatically 'the Prince of peace' (Isa. ix. 6). He was to send forth to the nations generally His message of grace and salvation; and to gather round Himself a people who should be meek, condescending, and forgiving. His victories were to be those of truth and grace. His servants were to go forth to their conflicts, not clad in the armour, nor brandishing the weapons, of earthly warfare, but 'in the beauty of holiness,' adorned with the graces which He should impart, declaring His own truth, and relying for success on the power of His unseen but almighty hand (Psalm cx. 2, 3). But the Messiah's administration, while it was to be eminently *gracious* and *benignant* to the humble and confiding spirit, was also to be distinguished by its perfect *rectitude*, and to be one of *terror* to the *perverse* and *rebellious* (Isa. xi. 4; Psalm xlv. 6, 7; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15; Isa. xl. 11; xxxii. 1, 2; Psalm ii. 9—12; Isa. xi. 4).

Such is a brief outline of the leading declarations of the ancient Scriptures respecting the coming Redeemer; and we affirm that in the Lord Jesus all these predictions were fulfilled. To those who admit the Divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, this argument in support of the claims of our Lord is itself conclusive; but even without taking their Divine authority as our starting-point, the accomplishment in Him of these prophetic intimations is an evidence of no slight weight that He is the Sent of God and the Saviour of men.

To complete this argument, we might refer to the fulfilment in our Lord of some of the most striking types of the Mosaic economy. In particular, the offering of the paschal lamb might be dwelt upon as foreshadowing the sacrifice of Calvary; and the arrangements relative to the great day of atonement as foreshadowing, though very imperfectly, the priestly mediation of the Lord Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. But this course of thought belongs rather to the development of Christian doctrine.

CHAPTER II.

THE CREDENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY—THE CHARACTER AND TEACHING OF CHRIST.

AMONG the credentials of Christianity an important place must be assigned to the *character* of its Founder,—a character which has called forth the admiration of many who have not submitted to His authority, and which cannot be accounted for by the circumstances which surrounded Him, and the influence of the age in which He lived on earth. On some of its leading features we may reverently dwell.

One of the most striking was His *profound devotion to the Father's will.* His first recorded utterance embodied this principle; and in His public ministry He affirmed it, again and again, as the governing principle of His earthly course. 'My meat,' He said, 'is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work' (John iv. 34). 'I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me' (John vi. 38). And as He stood on the verge of His deepest suffering, He addressed the Father in the words, 'I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do' (John xvii. 4).

Another feature of the character of the Lord Jesus was His *self-denying benevolence.* He submitted to a life of poverty and privation. He did not avail Himself of the devotion of His followers to secure a position of ease and worldly comfort. His own impressive declaration to one who wished to attend upon Him was, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to

lay His head' (Luke ix. 58). His boundless resources were never used by Him for His own advantage, or to promote His own enjoyment. But He was ever ready to relieve the distresses, and to promote the welfare, of others. He 'went about doing good.' He banished sickness from many a home which it had darkened; He comforted and healed many a sorrowful and broken heart. And at length, when His 'hour' arrived, He submitted, for our sakes, to the death of the cross.

Again, in contemplating the character of the Lord Jesus it becomes us to mark the union in Him of *tenderness* and *condescension* with *firmness of principle* and an *intense hatred to everything that is evil.* As we reflect upon His intercourse with His disciples and the devout family at Bethany, we perceive His tenderness and sympathy. The tears which He shed at the grave of Lazarus showed how deeply He felt the woes which the stern law of mortality has brought upon our race. The kind and condescending manner in which He welcomed returning sinners was a stumblingblock to some who valued themselves on their supposed sanctity. His own precious words come home even now to the hearts of the sinful and wretched,—those who are ready to sink and faint under the burden of conscious guilt. 'The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost' (Luke xix. 10). 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest' (Matt. xi. 28). But, on the other hand, this tenderness and condescension were combined with the greatest strength of character. No deviation from principle, no compromise with evil, tarnished His career. He reproved sin with unfaltering decision, and warned men of the fearful ruin in which persistence in it must issue.

Another striking feature of the character of our Lord was His *meekness.* No selfish irritation disturbed His spirit; no bursts of passion ruffled His mind, and impaired His influence. He manifested, indeed, a moral displeasure against sin, and that displeasure deep, settled, and intense; but He

did not resent with vehement passion the ingratitude with which He met during His earthly course, or the fierce insults, the cruel mockery, and the open violence which marked the close of that course. 'When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously' (1 Peter ii. 23). Even as He hung upon the cross, He prayed, amidst His anguish, for those who nailed Him to that accursed tree; 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' Luke xxiii. 34). He bowed meekly to all this suffering and shame, as involved in the work which He was to accomplish, and which should be recompensed in the salvation of multitudes who should trust in Him alone.

The character of Christ thus embraced the most attractive human virtues. But as we follow His footsteps, and listen to His words, we are struck with the loftiness of the claims which He put forth,—claims which no mere man could make. He affirmed His own freedom from sin. While He inculcated repentance on all who listened to Him in the synagogues of Galilee and Judæa, enforcing it as a duty of universal obligation, and as a necessary preparation for the enjoyment of the privileges of 'the kingdom of God,' He never gave utterance to any feeling of repentance on His own part. He challenged His adversaries, 'Which of you convicteth Me of sin?' And drawing near to the crisis of His earthly history, He addressed the Father in terms which implied that His obedience to His will had been unfailing, and His accomplishment of His purposes perfect.

But this is not all. He claimed to be Himself more than man. He spoke of Himself as 'the Only-Begotten Son of God,' standing in a relation to the Father which no human mind can fully comprehend (John iii. 16—18; Matt. xi. 27). He affirmed that He had come down from heaven to give life unto the world. He declared that He had existed from eternity, and that He was possessed of an inherent life which no one, without His will, could take away. 'Verily, verily, I say unto

you, Before Abraham was, I am' (John viii. 58). 'As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself' (John v. 26). 'No man taketh My life away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again' (John x. 18). He affirmed that His own energy resembled the ceaseless, ever-active energy of the Eternal Father. 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work' (John v. 17). He claimed to be the Arbiter of the eternal destinies of men. Referring to the great day of the final revelation of character, He declared, 'Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by Thy Name, and by Thy Name cast out devils, and by Thy Name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity' (Matt. vii. 22—23).

The astounding spectacle is thus presented to us of One who was meek and gentle, who evinced in His life and death a self-sacrificing benevolence, who ever manifested tenderness and sympathy with human suffering, blended with the firmest maintenance of principle and an intense hatred of hypocrisy and iniquity,—One, too, who claimed to be sinless, and whose governing principle was devotion to the Father's will,—putting forth claims which could only be justified by the union in His Person of the Divine and human natures. We are awed into profound reverence as we contemplate Him, and trace His footsteps, and mark His works, and see Him suffer. Admitting His claim to be a Divine-human Person, all is consistent: on every other supposition the character and words of Christ are perplexing and inexplicable.

For let us mark, further, the general character of *His teaching*. It is not too much to affirm that no such teacher had ever appeared before. He spoke of spiritual and heavenly things, not in the language of mere conjecture or probable reasoning, but with the distinctness and certainty of One to whom the spiritual world was known and familiar. He declared God to men, shedding light on the principles of His government, and

especially revealing His fatherly interest in mankind, and His minute regard to the circumstances and wants of individual men. He unfolded the spirituality of the Divine precepts, showing that they reach to the state of the heart, and detecting the secret evils that vitiate many actions that are outwardly good. Some of His declarations were profound and mysterious, especially when He spoke of His own Person and work, and of the spiritual salvation which He came to bestow; but all these were suited to One whose personal claims were so peculiar and lofty. And while His discourses had a charm for the thoughtful and devout, they were marked by an authority which often impressed His hearers. Even now, as we listen to His recorded words, we are often constrained to exclaim, 'Never man spake like this Man;' and as we mark His whole bearing, and character, and teaching, we feel that we are in the presence of a more than human Prophet.

CHAPTER III.

THE CREDENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY—THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

A THIRD leading evidence of the claims of the Lord Jesus is found in the *miracles* which He performed,—miracles which distinguished the whole course of His ministry. To these He Himself appealed. After referring to the testimony borne to Him by His forerunner, John the Baptist, He affirmed, 'But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me' (John v. 36).

It is not necessary now to dwell at any length on the argument against miracles which was alleged by Hume, and which was dealt with so successfully by the Christian apologists of a former generation. That argument was, that it is contrary to experience that a miracle should be true, but not contrary to experience that testimony should be false. But, as Paley and others have pointed out, there lurks a fallacy in the word 'experience,' and in the phrase, 'contrary to experience.' 'Strictly speaking,' Dr. Paley says, 'the narrative of a fact is then only contrary to experience, when the fact is related to have existed at a time and place, at which time and place we, being present, did not perceive it to exist; as if it should be asserted that in a particular room, and at a particular hour of a certain day, a man was raised from the dead, in which room, and at the time specified, we, being present, and looking on, perceived no such event to have taken place. Here the ascer-

tion is contrary to experience properly so called; and this is a contrariety which no evidence can surmount. . . . And, short of this, I know no intelligible signification which can be affixed to the term, "contrary to experience," but one, viz., that of not having ourselves experienced anything similar to the thing related, or such things not being generally experienced by others. I say, "not generally;" for to state concerning the fact in question, that no such thing was *ever* experienced, or that *universal* experience is against it, is to assume the subject of the controversy.'*

The objection now referred to implies that no testimony can be sufficient to establish the fact of a miracle. But this surely cannot be maintained. The clear and vigorous writer, whose words we have just cited, puts the case in the following striking manner:—'When a theorem is proposed to a mathematician, the first thing he does with it is to try it upon a simple case, and if it produce a false result, he is sure that there must be some mistake in the demonstration. Now to proceed in this way with what may be called Mr. Hume's theorem. If twelve men whose probity and good sense I had long known, should seriously and circumstantially relate to me an account of a miracle wrought before their eyes, and in which it was impossible that they should be deceived; if the governor of the country, hearing a rumour of this account, should call these men into his presence, and offer them a short proposal, either to confess the imposture or submit to be tied up to a gibbet; if they should refuse with one voice to acknowledge that there existed any falsehood or imposture in the case; if this threat were communicated to them separately, yet with no different effect; if it was at last executed; if I myself saw them, one after another, consenting to be racked, burnt, or strangled, rather than give up the truth of their account;—still, if Mr. Hume's rule be my guide, I am not to believe them. Now I undertake to say that there exists not a sceptic

* 'Evidences of Christianity.' Preparatory Considerations.

in the world who would not believe them, or who would defend such incredulity.'*

But in the present day the argument against miracles has assumed a different form. It is held that they are inconsistent with the grand conception, suggested by physical science, of the mutual relation of all material things, and a certain necessary and invariable succession of changes among them. To quote the words of the late Baden Powell, in his contribution to *Essays and Reviews*, 'In an age of physical research like the present, all highly cultivated minds and duly advanced intellects have, at least, in some measure, learned to appreciate the grand foundation-conception of universal law; to recognise the impossibility even of any two material atoms subsisting together without a determinate relation,—of any action of the one or the other, whether of equilibrium or of motion, without reference to a physical cause,—of any modification whatever in the existing conditions of material agents, unless through the invariable operation of a series of eternally impressed consequences, following in some chain of orderly connection, however imperfectly known to us.'

Now while we admit the regularity of the processes of nature, we yet hold that He who constituted nature can, and may, for great purposes connected with His moral administration, interpose to produce an effect beyond any which the operation of natural law could bring about. We ourselves are conscious of a power to influence the course of things around us. Our own will-force, put forth again and again, is one of the most certain facts with which we are acquainted; and if there is indeed an Almighty Creator and Ruler of this world, surely He can interpose, not to remedy the defects of the system of nature, or to set aside its laws, but to accomplish, by His own direct agency, that which natural law could not effect, but which He designs to subserve important moral ends. Mr. Conder has powerfully put the case thus:—'Divested of verbal disguises, the question of the possibility of miracles

* 'Evidences of Christianity.' Preparatory Considerations.

simply amounts to this:—*Is God as free to act as man?* Can He, if He sees fit, produce definite sensible effects in outward nature and in human minds, just as we can, but of course on a scale corresponding with omnipotence?'*

But we may go further, and after surveying, as we have done, the character, and teaching, and claims of the Lord Jesus, we may affirm that it was suited to Him,—that it was indeed to be expected,—that He should perform miracles. When such a Prophet appeared among men, impressing by His whole character and bearing every thoughtful and earnest mind, and, while exhibiting lowliness and self-sacrifice, claiming a peculiar and unique relation to God, it might well be that He should evince a more than human power, and should control, by the putting forth of His will, even the mightiest elements of nature.

We turn, then, to the recorded miracles of our Lord; and we find them eminently worthy of Him. Generally speaking, they were miracles of mercy. He healed the sick; He gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf; He rescued from the tyranny of the powers of darkness those unhappy persons whom they had possessed. On some occasions, when the multitudes who had flocked to His ministry were ready to faint from exhaustion, He fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes. He stilled the raging of the sea, and hushed the tempestuous wind into a calm, so that they who were with Him were constrained to exclaim, 'What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?' In three instances He restored the dead to life, summoning back the spirit from the invisible world, and reanimating the frame which had succumbed to the stroke of mortality.

The manner of the Saviour, too, in the performance of His miracles is calculated to impress every thoughtful mind. When other prophets were made the instruments of working miracles, they distinctly avowed that they were but instruments; and the Apostles, in particular, ever made it prominent that they

* 'The Basis of Faith,' Second Edition, Lecture VI., p. 261.

acted in the name of the Lord Jesus, and that the miracles were wrought by His unseen power. But our Lord claimed to be Himself the Agent in the performance of His mighty works; and in reference to one in particular, He affirmed, 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work' (John v. 17). While He referred the whole of his mediatorial ministry to the Father's counsel, He spoke and acted as Himself possessed of an inherent life, as the Sustainer and Ruler of universal nature.

Let us reflect, too, that many of our Lord's miracles shadowed forth the great spiritual blessings which He came to confer upon mankind; and some of them were distinctly connected with the assurance of forgiveness to troubled and anxious spirits, and were wrought to show that He, the Son of Man, had power on earth to forgive sins.

Now when we dwell on the mighty works of our Lord, bearing in mind His character and teaching, we find in them the seal of Divine authority affixed to His loftiest claims, and to the message which He delivered. We are not only constrained to say with Nicodemus, 'Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that Thou doest except God be with Him;' but we are led onward to adopt the confession of Peter, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE CREDENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY—THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

THE crowning miracle of Christianity is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. On this great fact the Apostles ever rested the proof of their Master's claims. Peter and the other Apostles announced it, a few weeks after its occurrence, to the people of Jerusalem generally, and boldly affirmed it in the presence of the Sanhedrim, when summoned to appear before them. Addressing the crowds who gathered around him and the Apostle John, after the healing of the lame man who had so long sat asking for alms at the 'Beautiful' gate of the temple, Peter said, 'Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release Him. But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life; Whom God raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses. And by faith in His name hath His name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know' (Acts iii. 12—16). To the Sanhedrim he declared, 'Ye rulers of the people, and elders, if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye

crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in Him doth this man stand here before you whole' (Acts iv. 8—10). So, likewise, the Apostle Paul, addressing the Athenians, appealed to this fact as conclusively attesting our Lord's present exaltation, and His appointment by the Father to exercise the final judgment. 'God now commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent; inasmuch as He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead (Acts xvii. 30, 31).

To appreciate this testimony to the claims of the Lord Jesus, it is necessary to bear in mind that He Himself, in the course of His public ministry, repeatedly foretold His own death and resurrection. From the very first, He referred to these events, and spoke of His resurrection as that which should vindicate all His pretensions. He did so in His first visit to Jerusalem as a religious Teacher. When appealed to by the Jews, 'What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?' He replied, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up' (John ii. 18, 19). In His intercourse with His Apostles He often spoke of these coming events, unwilling as they were to think of the death of One whom they so revered and loved, and especially to think of His enduring the ignominious and torturing death of the cross. He dwelt on this topic again and again, and declared that on the third day He should rise again. So well was it known that He had uttered this prediction, that after the chief priests and Pharisees had accomplished their guilty purpose, and our Lord's lifeless body was deposited in Joseph's tomb, they went to Pilate and said, 'Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply His disciples come and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first' (Matt. xxvii. 63, 64).

Again, it is necessary to remember the special bearing of our Lord's resurrection on His loftiest claim,—even to be *the Son of God*, in a sense altogether peculiar and unique. It was on the ground of this claim that the Sanhedrim condemned Him to death as a blasphemer; and although, for some time, they rested their application to Pilate for His death on other pleas, they were obliged, at last, to disclose the real ground on which they had passed judgment upon Him. 'We have a law,' they said, 'and by that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God' (John xix. 7). This, then, was the great point at issue; and as we contemplate the Lord Jesus, after His death of shame and agony, coming forth from the sepulchre, no longer the Man of sorrows, we boldly affirm with St. Paul, that He was 'declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead' (Rom. i. 4).

The evidence on which the Apostles relied as attesting the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was ample and conclusive. The very fact that His body was not securely kept in the sepulchre, guarded, as it was, by Roman soldiers, at the request of the chief priests, was itself an evidence of the resurrection. In no other way can it be satisfactorily accounted for. The supposition that His timid disciples, who had forsaken Him in the hour of danger, formed the scheme of removing His body will not bear examination for a moment. Had they done so, and endeavoured to carry that scheme into effect, they would have been apprehended by the Roman guard, or even have met death in the attempt. Besides, the one thought of those who loved the Saviour, after the awful scene of Calvary had closed, was to do honour to His sacred body. The feeling which actuated Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus, and the devout Galilean women who hastened with spices to the tomb on the first day of the week, was doubtless shared by His sincere followers generally.

But the Apostles had the evidence also of repeated interviews with their risen Lord. They saw Him; they touched Him; they even sat with Him at table, and partook with Him of their

ordinary food. This was an evidence which could not be resisted; and it was most impressively set forth by St. Peter in his address to the company assembled in the house of Cornelius. After referring to the public ministry of the Lord Jesus, that 'He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him,' he added, 'And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they slew, hanging Him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead' (Acts x. 39—41).

In connection with this evidence of the resurrection of our Lord, it is important to reflect that it is only this fact, combined with the other great event which marked the opening of the Christian dispensation,—the coming of the Holy Ghost,—which can account for the change in the Apostles of our Lord. Before His death and resurrection they were timid and almost powerless; and, though they sincerely loved Him, they had not entered fully into His great spiritual designs, and in the hour of peril, they 'forsook Him and fled.' But now they stood forth boldly to assert His claims in the face of obloquy and persecution. And they adhered to their testimony, and to the cause of their risen Lord, until, at length, they sealed their testimony with their blood. By only *not* bearing their witness and not affirming the claims of their Master, they might, for the most part, have lived in security and ease; but they voluntarily encountered privations, sufferings, and even death itself, rather than renounce their allegiance to Him.

But besides the twelve, who stood forth as the first witnesses of our Lord's resurrection, we have the testimony of another who was once the fiercest opponent of the name of Jesus, who haled to prison many who believed in Him, and even compelled some of them to blaspheme. Saul, the fiery persecutor, when on his way to Damascus, 'breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord Jesus,' was himself

arrested by the Saviour's power, and heard from His lips the question, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?' That scene led, in his case, to an entire change of character; he became an Apostle of Him whose cause he had sought to overthrow; and henceforth he was ever ready to endure suffering, reproach, persecution, and death itself, for the sake of the Lord Jesus. And while he dwelt, especially in his reasonings with the Jews, on the fulfilment of prophecy in our Lord's Person and work, he ever made prominent the well-attested fact of His resurrection, as that on which His claims reposed as on a firm and immovable basis. Thus in writing to the Church at Corinth he says, 'I delivered unto you, first of all, that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then He appeared to James; then to all the Apostles; and last of all, as unto one born out of due time, He appeared to me also' (1 Cor. xv. 3—8).

The two allied facts of our Lord's death and resurrection are confirmed, as we have already intimated, by two of the institutions of Christianity,—the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day. To illustrate the bearing of these on the argument, we may take an analogous case in the history of the Jewish people. That people observed the passover. At a particular period of the year, they put away all leavened bread, and with very peculiar rites, all calculated to recall the passing of the destroying angel over the families of Israel, when the firstborn of Egypt fell victims to his power, and, in connection with this, the coming forth of their fathers from that land of bondage, they ate the paschal lamb. Now the observance of this institution by generation after generation attested the facts which it commemorated. Had an attempt been made to introduce it, some hundreds of years afterwards, to commemorate a supposed fact

which had never before been heard of, it could not have been adopted by a whole people. They would naturally have inquired, How came we never to hear of this before? If this event occurred, and if it was the express appointment of God that it should be commemorated by a particular rite, why did not our fathers mention it, or even allude to it? Now, in the Christian Church, the Supper of the Lord has been observed from the very first, in remembrance of the Saviour's death, and as an expression of the appropriation of His sacrifice for spiritual life and strength. We trace back the history of Christianity from the present day to the time of the Apostles, and we find this institution distinguishing the system, and setting forth the death of Jesus as its greatest and most momentous fact. From the very first, too, the Christian Church has observed the first day of the week as the day of the Saviour's triumph over death. From age to age the Lord's Day has been the standing memorial of the resurrection. Here, then, we have two institutions,—institutions referred to in all the intimations of history, and all the writings of the Christian Church from the beginning until now; and these institutions concur with the evangelical records in setting forth the death and resurrection of Jesus as the prominent facts of Christianity.

Here, then, we rest with confidence. If Jesus died and rose again, Christianity is of God. His resurrection affixes the seal of Divine authority to His mission, His doctrines, His precepts, His personal claims. It proves Him to be what He affirmed Himself to be,—the long-expected Messiah, the Son of God Incarnate, the great sacrificial offering for the sins of the world, and the only and almighty Saviour of perishing men.

CHAPTER V.

THE CREDENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY—CHRISTIANITY ATTESTED BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST.

WHILE the Christian system rests securely on the great facts of the Saviour's history, and especially on His death and resurrection, its claims are also established by the living energy of the Spirit of God which, in every age, applies the message of Christ to the conscience, and which, when that message is embraced, effects even a new creation in the heart of man.

It is impossible carefully to read the Christian records without perceiving how distinctly and firmly this truth was held by the Apostles. When St. Peter addressed the Sanhedrim, in answer to the charge that he and his fellow-apostles continued, notwithstanding their prohibition, to publish the doctrine and claims of the Lord Jesus, he boldly affirmed the resurrection of his Master, and His exaltation by God to be a Prince and a Saviour; and then he added, 'And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him' (Acts v. 32). In his first Epistle, after speaking of the testimony borne by the ancient prophets, under the immediate guidance of the Spirit, to 'the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them,' he adds, 'To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the Gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven: which things angels desire to look into' (1 Peter i. 11, 12). So, also, St. Paul writes

to the Thessalonians, 'Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance' (1 Thess. i. 5).

But this is not all. In their addresses to believers, the Apostles appeal to them as having experienced, through coming to Christ, a decided spiritual change. 'If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new' (2 Cor. v. 17). They speak of God as newly moulding the soul that receives the Lord Jesus, so as to give a new character to all its habits and tendencies, and one that will develop itself in the practice of all that is morally beautiful and good. Thus St. Paul writes, 'For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them' (Ephes. ii. 10). In another place, after adverting to the consummated glory that awaits believers, he adds, 'Now He that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit' (2 Cor. v. 5). The sentiment expressed in the last words is one on which he repeatedly dwells,—that the Holy Spirit, by His immediate working in the souls of believers, imparts to them the very beginning of the peace, and purity, and joy, which distinguish the heavenly state. 'In whom,' he writes to the Ephesians, 'ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the Gospel of your salvation,—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of His glory' (Ephes. i. 13, 14). And in another Epistle he thus represents the rich communications of grace which God bestows on His believing people: 'Now He that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts' (2 Cor. i. 21, 22).

Now this is a feature of Christianity, as preached by the Apostles of our Lord, which well merits attention. They proclaimed a religion of *living power*. They went forth relying on the aid of the Spirit whom their Master had promised to

them as their Succourer and Comforter; and they were assured that His unseen energy would apply their message to the hearts and consciences of men. It was their settled conviction, that while they delivered Christ's truth, and announced the offer of life in Him, they should actually 'minister the Spirit' to men. They promised, indeed, to all who should cherish their gracious impressions, and come in penitence and faith to the Lord Jesus, such a communication of the Holy Ghost as would give them inward peace, and purity, and strength. They held forth the promise of the Spirit as meeting the deepest wants of humanity, as effecting that within the breast which all the power of philosophy could not effect, and as imparting to men, in their own consciousness, the 'earnest' of eternal life.

They stood pledged to this; and had no changes followed, —had not the putting forth of a self-renouncing faith in Jesus led to any communication of purity and holy power,—their preaching would have been falsified. But it was not so. In hundreds, yea, thousands of instances, an entire transformation of moral character was effected. The proud became humble; the votaries of sensual pleasure turned away from every forbidden gratification, and delighted in that which is pure and spiritual; the selfish became benevolent; and the timid were enabled to confess Christ at the hazard of their worldly interests. Such changes were wrought on men of different nations,—of different natural temperaments,—and of different habits of thought and feeling. There was a power from above which immediately gave to all who embraced the Saviour a new character, and caused them to aspire to new and spiritual joys.

On the power of the Holy Ghost, accompanying the Christian message, when proclaimed in its simplicity, and in prayerful dependence on His promised aid, we still rely; and we appeal to His saving and purifying operation on the mind that accepts Christ as one of the strongest credentials of our faith,—one, too, which each of us may realise in the depth of his own consciousness. The painful dread of the Divine displeasure is removed as the contrite spirit rests on the Lord Jesus; and the

Holy Ghost becomes to us 'the Spirit of adoption,' prompting and sustaining the cry, 'Abba, Father.' The conflict between an enlightened judgment and conscience and the impulses of sinful passion, which so often issued in the triumph of unholy tendencies, now assumes a different character; for the power of sin is broken, and 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and of death.' This is an evidence of the Divine authority of Christianity which is to last from age to age. The figurative language of Isaiah beautifully sets forth the spiritual changes which should follow the reception of the Christian message, and impressively marks these changes as the *permanent* sign which should attest the working of a Divine power. 'For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off' (Isa. lv. 12, 13).

CHAPTER VI.

THE CREDENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY—THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE WORLD.

IN considering the evidences of the Divine authority of Christianity, it is important to regard the influence which it has exerted upon the course of human history, and especially on the moral condition of the world.

It can scarcely be questioned that Christianity has been one of the greatest powers in this world's history. It came forth in apparent weakness, to claim the submission of the race of Israel, in opposition to their cherished prejudices and hopes, to challenge and denounce the colossal system of idolatry that prevailed throughout the Roman Empire, and that was upheld as the religion of the state,—and to turn men away from the speculations of philosophy, or, at least, to treat those speculations as utterly insufficient to lead men to the true knowledge of God, or to guide them to purity and happiness. Its advocates possessed no outward advantages, and enjoyed no powerful patronage, but were poor, and despised, and were often subjected to violent and cruel treatment. One of their number has left on record, in several passages of his writings, the sufferings to which he and his fellow-labourers were subjected, indicating also the spirit in which they pursued their labours. Expostulating with the Church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul says, 'For, I think, God hath set forth us the Apostles last of all, as men doomed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye

are strong; ye have glory, but we have dishonour. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and we toil, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things, even until now' (1 Cor. iv. 9—13). In his second Epistle to that Church he says, 'Giving no occasion of stumbling in any thing, that our ministration be not blamed; but in every thing commending ourselves as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; in pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Ghost, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things' (2 Cor. vi. 3—10). The great fact which the Apostles set forth as the ground of human hope—the death of Jesus upon the cross—was calculated to shock the prejudices of the Jews, and to revolt those who delighted in the speculations of philosophy, and who hoped by intellectual culture to attain the highest excellence of which human nature is capable. 'The Jews,' says St. Paul, 'ask for signs; and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God' (1 Cor. i. 22—24). But, notwithstanding all this, Christianity triumphed. Christian Churches were formed in every city which the Apostles and their fellow-labourers visited; and they who embraced the faith of Jesus maintained their profession, though subjected, for the most part, to reproach and violence.

The testimony of Pliny the younger, governor of the province of Bithynia, to the character and wide diffusion of Christianity, has been already alluded to; but it may be here expressly cited. Writing to the Emperor Trajan, about A.D. 110, he informs him that if his decrees were rigidly executed, 'many of all ages, of every rank, and of both sexes, would be involved in the danger; for the contagion of this superstition has seized not only cities, but also the villages and open country.' 'The temples,' he goes on to say, 'are nearly deserted, the ordinary rites of worship have been long interrupted, and seldom does any one come forward as a purchaser of victims for sacrifice.' And, after stating that he had put two women, who held the office of deaconesses, to the torture, in order to discover what were really the crimes of which the Christians were guilty, he affirms that all that he had been able to ascertain was, that they were in the habit of meeting together on a certain day, (the Lord's day,) that they then united in a hymn of praise to their God, Christ, and that they bound one another to refrain from theft and adultery, to be faithful in performing their promises, and to withhold from none the property entrusted to their keeping; that after this they separated, and met again in the evening at a simple and innocent meal. The early Christian Apologists often refer to the general prevalence of our religion. Justin Martyr, once a heathen philosopher, but who had found true wisdom and abiding peace in Christ, writes, about the year 150, 'There is not a nation, Greek or barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wander in tribes and live in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe, in the name of the crucified Jesus.' And Tertullian, who flourished towards the end of the second, and the beginning of the third, century, says, in his Apology addressed to the 'Rulers of the Roman Empire,' 'We are but of yesterday, and we have filled every place among you,—cities, islands, fortresses, towns, market-places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum; we have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods.'

Now we maintain that the wide diffusion of Christianity, under the circumstances in which it was first proclaimed, can only be satisfactorily accounted for by a Divine power attending its announcements, leading men to give up their sins and forego their worldly advantages, and then imparting to them, upon their embracing the Saviour, the peace and purity which He had promised.

But Christianity has continued to influence mankind, and has contributed to mould the character and institutions of the most powerful and cultivated nations. And just in proportion as its truths have been set forth in their simplicity and purity, and its precepts have been enforced with fidelity and earnestness, its influence has been most beneficial. It has elevated the tone of public morals; it has purified and ennobled domestic life; it has raised the position of woman; it has prompted and sustained benevolent efforts,—efforts directed to mitigate the sufferings of the afflicted, and to console and provide for the widow and the orphan. It has given to the gentler virtues of sympathy, compassion, and tenderness their proper place in the estimate of human character and conduct, while it has enforced the strictest regard to right and duty. It has promoted humility, as distinguished from abjectness of spirit,—the humility which arises from the consciousness of entire dependence on a Higher Power, as well as from a generous estimate of the virtues and excellences of others, and which consists with an earnest striving after all that is excellent and good. And, above all, it has enjoined self-sacrificing love to others, and has actually implanted that principle in the hearts of all who have yielded up themselves to its power. In the presence of the Cross, where the Incarnate Son of God endured for us pain, and anguish, and death, selfishness is revealed in all its deformity; and every follower of the Crucified One is bound to resist it, and to tread in the footsteps of his Lord's self-denying benignity.

True it is that the influence of Christianity has been marred by those corruptions of its teaching which have prevailed in different ages, and by the evil passions of many who have pro-

fessed to be its disciples, but who have not imbibed its spirit, or experienced that spiritual change which it requires. But this is only one illustration of the general truth, that this earth is now the theatre of a great spiritual conflict, as well as one of probation to individual men. As far as the doctrines and precepts of Christ and His Apostles have been allowed to operate on the character and lives of men, they have elevated, refined, and purified them. And were Christianity universally diffused in its life and power, the worst evils of earth would be removed, and its unavoidable sorrows would be mitigated and relieved. We appeal, then, with confidence to the moral influence which our religion directly tends to exert as a powerful evidence of its Divine authority.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SACRED WRITINGS OF CHRISTIANITY—THE OLD TESTAMENT—THE NEW TESTAMENT.

WE have already dwelt on the fact, that the appearance of the Lord Jesus among men had been prepared for by earlier revelations, and especially by the existence of the Jewish Church. That Church possessed its collection of Sacred Writings, which our Lord and His Apostles recognised and endorsed; so that the Scriptures of the Old Testament are numbered among the Sacred Books which Christians hold dear.

In the appeal which has already been made to the prophetic intimations of the expected Deliverer, contained in the ancient Scriptures, we have not entered upon the question of their Divine authority. Our object was, to call attention to the remarkable fact that, during a series of ages, the Mosaic institute had existed with its peculiar rites, and that a succession of men who professed to be inspired, and whose writings were received as inspired, foretold the coming, the ministry, the sufferings, and the triumph of the Messiah. In exhibiting the character of Christianity as preeminently a religion of *fact*, not of abstract truths, it was essential to take note of these preparatory arrangements; while the accomplishment in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus of these prophetic declarations forms one link in the chain of evidence by which His claims are attested.

The authority of the Mosaic institute, and of all the announcements of truth which Moses was commissioned to make, was evinced by the miracles which marked his career, and

especially by those which were connected with the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt,—a deliverance commemorated by that people in every subsequent stage of their history. The impressive scene of Sinai crowned the whole. That revelation of Jehovah not only invested with the highest authority and a peculiar sacredness the great moral precepts which He there delivered, but attested the character of Moses as His prophet, whom His people were to follow and obey.

It is not maintained that similar attestations established the authority of all the other writers of the Old Testament. But it is undeniable that there was a succession of prophets, who claimed to receive and utter Divine messages; and the Jewish Church, under the guidance of some of these, received as inspired and authoritative the Books which we now recognise as those of the Old Covenant. With regard to some of these writings, the fulfilment of the predictions which they contained —predictions which no human foresight could have enabled their authors to utter—stamped them as of Divine authority; while their general character and the spiritual power which they were calculated to exert were an additional evidence of this. The claim of inspiration, as put forth by men who had been trained under the Jewish economy, was one peculiarly solemn. Professor Wace has forcibly illustrated this thought. Speaking both of the Prophets and the Apostles, he says, 'These men were not pagans by birth and education, and accustomed, like Greeks, to think lightly of a Divine Being, and of communications with Him. They were Jews, who had the third commandment continually before their eyes, and for whom the very name of God possessed an awful and almost unutterable solemnity. To a Pharisee of the Pharisees like St Paul, the idea of a communication from God must have been far more overpowering than it is to a modern sceptic. The traditions of his nation, indeed, rendered him familiar with its possibility, but at the same time enhanced its solemnity. Neither in the Prophets nor in the Apostles is there any other feeling than that of supreme awe and responsibility in view of the tremen-

dous privilege conferred upon them. "Woe is me," exclaims Isaiah, "for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." To quote Professor Kuenen's acknowledgment on this point, "We see here," he says, "men who can find no words sufficient to declare the might and majesty of Jahveh, who have a deep and lively feeling of their own utter nothingness before Him, and nevertheless, in spite of the distance which separates them from Him, declare emphatically that they know His counsel and speak His word."'*

But when the claims of the Lord Jesus are established by those converging lines of evidence which we have endeavoured to trace, we may safely rest the Divine authority and inspiration of the Old Testament on His recorded testimony. He ever appealed to 'the Scriptures'; and He has stamped all the Books received by the Jewish Church of His own day with His own authority. Illustrations of this are found on almost every page of the evangelical histories; but we can only select a few. In one of His controversies with the unbelieving Jews, He cited a passage from one of the Psalms, adding 'The Scripture cannot be broken' (John x. 35). On a later occasion, when conversing with the chief priests and scribes, He replied to their exclamation 'God forbid,' 'What then is this that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner?' (Luke xx. 17.) On His way to Gethsemane, He said to His disciples, 'This which is written must be fulfilled in Me, And He was reckoned with the transgressors: for that which concerneth Me hath fulfilment' (Luke xxii. 37). In the garden, after reproving Peter for his rash act, in smiting the servant of the high priest, He said, 'Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech My Father, and He shall even now send Me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?' (Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.) After His resurrection from the dead, He expos-

* Bampton Lectures, 'The Foundations of Faith,' Lecture III., pp. 73, 74.

tulated with the two disciples going to Emmaus, 'O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?' and then, 'beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself' (Luke xxiv. 25—27). And in one of His interviews with the assembled company of His Apostles, He said to them, 'These are My words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning Me' (Luke xxiv. 44).

But the Sacred Writings of Christianity comprehend also the Books of the New Testament. Our Lord Himself did not write; but He prepared His Apostles to establish Christian Churches after His departure, and to provide for the perpetuation and universal diffusion of the truths which He had declared. He gave to them the promise of the Holy Ghost as 'the Spirit of truth,' to unfold to them the whole Christian scheme, to guide them into all the truth, and to bring all His teaching to their remembrance. In His last discourse with them before He suffered, when the traitor had retired, He repeated this promise again and again. 'These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you' (John xiv. 25, 26). 'But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me; and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning' (John xv. 26, 27). 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: nd He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He

shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you' (John xvi. 12—14). And while He thus provided for their spiritual illumination, He constituted them the authoritative teachers of His religion. After His resurrection from the dead, He said to them. 'As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you' (John xx. 21). And to attest this claim, He empowered them to perform miracles in His name; while the living energy of the Holy Ghost, which accompanied their message, and wrought decided spiritual changes in the hearts of all who embraced it, was the crowning seal of their authority.

It is instructive also to observe that the Apostles *claim* inspiration and Divine authority for their teaching; and the solemnity of that claim, as put forth by men trained under the Jewish economy, must be borne in mind. The quotation already given from Professor Wace forcibly illustrates this. That claim itself, as made by religious and earnest men, would demand attention; but when it is combined with the promise of special illumination given by our Lord, and with the miracles which He enabled them to work,—when, still further, it is viewed in connection with the character of the writings which they left to the Church, and the moral and spiritual influence which those writings have exerted,—it becomes irresistible. We may select a few passages in which this claim is expressly advanced. 'For this cause we also thank God without ceasing that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe' (1 Thess. ii. 13). 'But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual' (1 Cor. ii. 12, 13). 'If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandments of the Lord' (1 Cor. xiv. 37). St. Peter, it may be added, places

the injunctions of the Apostles on a level with the words spoken by the holy Prophets in former ages, and recognises the Epistles of his 'beloved brother Paul' as a part of the Sacred Writings (2 Peter iii. 2; 15, 16).

Thus, then, the Christian Church has received as authoritative the writings which could justly claim Apostolic authorship or Apostolic authorisation. Respecting a few of the Books comprehended in the New Testament, as the Second Epistle of St. Peter and the Epistle to the Hebrews, doubts were entertained, for some years, in some of the Churches; but the Canon, as we now have it, was finally settled at the third Council of Carthage, A.D. 397; and the Christian Church justly prizes its Sacred Writings as its greatest treasure.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SACRED WRITINGS OF CHRISTIANITY—THE FORMATION OF THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—INSPIRATION—PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION.

IT is not difficult to form a conception of the manner in which the collection of Sacred Books which we designate the New Testament was formed. The worship of the early Christian Churches resembled, to a great extent, that of the Jewish synagogue. Not only was solemn prayer offered to God, but the ancient Scriptures were publicly read, and addresses and exhortations founded upon them were delivered. In Christian assemblies the elder or elders who gave addresses set forth the facts of the life, the death, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, unfolded the doctrines of the gospel, and enforced the duties which it inculcated. Usually, also, on the Lord's day, the supper of the Lord was observed, as a solemn act of spiritual communion and of a covenant-relation to God in Christ.

It will give vividness to our conceptions if we select a particular case, to illustrate the gradual formation of the canon of the New Testament. The Church at Philippi was founded by the Apostle Paul; and he ever cherished towards it a peculiar attachment. In his absence, the elders of that Church, doubtless, often referred to his teaching, while they encouraged the believers to steadfastness in their profession, and to a holy walk and conversation. But on one Lord's day a special interest is given to the assembling of that Church. St. Paul is a prisoner at Rome, uncertain whether he will ever be

permitted to visit them again, or whether his earthly career will be speedily closed. The Philippian Christians have not been unmindful of his position and wants. They have sent to him Epaphroditus with a practical expression of their sympathy and love. And now, once more, Epaphroditus appears in their midst, bringing with him a Letter from the revered and beloved Apostle who had led many among them to Christ. That Letter is publicly read in their assembly, just as the Scriptures of the Old Testament are read; and henceforth the Epistle to the Philippians takes its place among the Sacred Writings, and is read again and again as an authoritative exposition of Christian doctrine and duty. Nor is this all. The Church at Philippi learns that other Epistles have been sent by St. Paul to other Christian Churches; and, while rejoicing to send copies of that addressed to them to every Christian community within their reach, they take measures to procure copies of these other Epistles.

It is pleasing to trace, in the New Testament, the intimations of the intercourse which subsisted between neighbouring Churches, as well as the solicitude of the Apostles, that their writings should be publicly read and carefully pondered. In the very earliest of St. Paul's Epistles,—the first of those to the Thessalonians,—he says, 'I adjure you by the Lord that this Epistle be read unto all the brethren' (1 Thess. v. 27); and in closing his Epistle to the Church at Colossæ, he writes, 'And when this Epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that ye also read the Epistle from Laodicea,'—this last being, in all probability, the Epistle to the Ephesians, which, as a *circular* Epistle, was doubtless addressed to many Churches in that district. In these passages there is a distinct recognition of the practice which obtained in the early Christian Churches of publicly reading the writings of the Apostles,—a practice continued among us to this very day, and which afforded the greatest possible security for the uncorrupted preservation of these invaluable documents.

By this process the collection of the Christian Scriptures was gradually formed, the Memoirs of the Saviour's life and ministry written by Apostles, or authenticated by them,—the Gospel of St. Mark, for instance, being authenticated by St. Peter, and that of St. Luke by St. Paul,—together with the Letters of the Apostles, being read in the Churches as on a level with the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

It is not within the design of this work to exhibit the evidence by which the genuineness and authenticity of the several Books of the New Testament are sustained. This evidence belongs rather to the province of Introduction to the Books respectively. But it is important to note that these writings are appealed to by a succession of Christian authors, from the time of the Apostles until now; and some of them, in particular, are very largely quoted. It may be safely affirmed, that the study of the works comprehended in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library will produce a profound conviction, that the writings which we now read in our Christian assemblies as the Books of the New Covenant are those which have been so read in Christian Churches from the earliest ages.

One illustration of this subject may be briefly given. The testimonies of early Christian writers to the Fourth Gospel are numerous and striking. Justin Martyr, to whom we have already referred, quotes, in his first Apology, as the words of our Lord, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Hippolytus, who wrote towards the close of the second, or the beginning of the third, century, says, 'Thus, then, was the Word made flesh, even as the blessed John says. For he sums up the things that were said by the prophets, and shows that this is the Word, by whom all things were made. For he speaks to this effect, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made." And afterwards he says, "The world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not; He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."' The

testimony of Irenæus is still more copious and striking. This eminent man, having spent his earlier years in Asia Minor, removed to Gaul, and became bishop of the Church at Lyons about A.D. 180. He wrote an elaborate treatise 'Against Heresies.' In refutation of the sentiment of the Gnostics, that the God of the Old Testament, the Creator of the world, in which so much evil is found, was a different Being from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, he appeals to almost innumerable passages of the Holy Scriptures, and he quotes largely from the Gospel according to St. John. Having cited passages from the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, in opposition to the error in question, he goes on to say, 'John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word; and not, as they allege, that the Creator was one, but the Father of our Lord another. . . . The disciple of the Lord, therefore, desiring to put an end to all such doctrines, and to establish the rule of truth in the Church, that there is one Almighty God, who made all things by His Word, both visible and invisible; showing, at the same time, that by the Word, through whom God made the creation, He also bestowed salvation on the men included in the creation, thus commenced his teaching in the Gospel:—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made. What was made was life in Him, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."'* In a similar manner does Irenæus quote passage after passage from the fourth Gospel, as written by that Apostle who was favoured with the special friendship of the adorable Redeemer.

* 'Against Heresies,' Book III., ch. xi. Clark's Ante-Nicene Library.

The value of this testimony it is scarcely possible to exaggerate. Irenæus, as he himself tells us, had been a disciple of Polycarp, who had sat at the feet of the Apostle John: and if that Gospel had been palmed upon the Churches about the year 150, —as some now allege, though without any shadow of historical proof,—it is incredible that Irenæus could have received it as the work of the Apostle. Doubtless he would have said, John wrote no Gospel, or I should have heard of it from my venerable instructor Polycarp, who listened to that Apostle, and remained the bishop of a Church near that in which St. John spent his last days.

We have already seen that the claim of *inspiration* for the Old Testament Scriptures is sanctioned by our Lord Himself, and that He promised the Holy Spirit to His Apostles, to guide them into all the truth, while He constituted them the authoritative teachers of His religion. It is not necessary to inquire into the precise *mode* of inspiration. It is quite clear that, in some cases, the very words of Scripture were *suggested*, since we know, from the testimony of St. Peter, that the ancient Prophets did not always understand the full import, or the precise application, of the predictions which they were inspired to utter. The words of the Apostle are, 'Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into' (1 Peter i. 10—12). But in the historical, the didactic, and the devotional portions of the Sacred Writings, the action of the Holy Spirit on the mind would naturally assume different forms, securing, however,

sufficient *guidance* and *control*, and thus giving to the writings the character of the Word of God. The individuality of the writers was left unimpaired; they were free, also, to refer to sources of information that were accessible on some topics on which they wrote; but their minds were under a special influence of the Holy Ghost. Dr. Pope has beautifully said, 'The Spirit used His instruments as men: their sanctity, or special consecration to their task, was the sanctification of their natural endowments, acquisitions, and study. They were not passive in the writing of Scripture, even to that degree in which they were passive in receiving revelation. They wrote, sometimes after long interval, what they had received; and always according to the characteristics of their individual genius, style of thoughts, and diction. But their faculties were raised, invigorated, and strengthened to their highest pitch. What has been termed the *dynamical* theory of inspiration,—namely, that its influence acted upon and through the faculties of the inspired person,—is proved to be true by all the phenomena of the several Books. From the record of the most transcendent visions down to the simplest private letter, the writer in Scripture is true to himself. No individual author in the classical literature of Greece or Rome differs more from every other than every writer in Scripture differs from his fellow, Chronicler from Chronicler, Prophet from Prophet, Evangelist from Evangelist, Apostle from Apostle.' *

The following observations of this profound writer are also worthy of careful attention:—'A large portion of Scripture is testimony to fact of various kinds; and no theory of inspiration of witnesses can be accepted which should destroy their independent character as witnesses. They were inspired or moved to deliver their independent and faithful testimony. Sometimes they have to register facts, or supposed facts, which they gather from public records; sometimes to record traditions, legends, current opinions, or uninspired predictions handed down by tradition; in these cases they are only witnesses of

* 'Compendium of Christian Theology,' vol i., p. 171.

what they found. Sometimes they have to narrate events in which they had taken part to a greater or less extent: in this case they are directed to chronicle the result of their own investigations, each according to his own lights. Occasionally they are concurrent witnesses of transactions which they observed from different points of view: under such circumstances there is no previous harmonising of the testimonies, but each gives his own faithful witness, according to his Divinely aided remembrance, the Divine aid, however, not necessarily rectifying the original defect or incompleteness of observation. Hence arise certain differences of presentation, which the free Spirit has permitted: differences which are just enough to show that the witnesses are sent to give their evidence as independent, never enough to betray the supreme cause of truth.

'Once more, much of the Scripture is the result of what would be called among men editorial arrangement. This extends over a considerable portion of the Old Testament, and is what St. Luke, for instance, in the New claims for his own function. Now the presiding and controlling influence of the Spirit was as much needed for this as for any other department of the economy of revelation; but His inspiration was of a different character. He taught His instruments to distinguish in Hebrew literature what was His own and what was not; He superintended the arrangement of the Psalms; He taught the Evangelists to sift the oral traditions which were rich with the deposits and memorials of the Sacred Life; and generally, He watched over and directed the construction of organic Holy Writ as one great body of Literature, in many human respects like all other literature, but Divinely distinguished from every other.'*

The principles which should guide us in the *interpretation* of Holy Scripture can only be briefly adverted to. The general *rules* laid down by Bishop Ellicott, in his valuable contribution to 'Aids to Faith,' are remarkably simple and easy to be remembered; and they commend themselves at once to

* 'Compendium of Christian Theology,' vol. i., pp. 172, 173.

every thoughtful mind. They are, first, that we should ascertain, as clearly as may be possible, the literal and grammatical meaning of the words; secondly, that we should illustrate, wherever practicable, by references to history, topography, and antiquities; thirdly, that we should develop the meaning under the limitations assigned by the context; and fourthly, that in every passage we should elicit the full significance of all details. More briefly, these rules may be stated thus:—we are to interpret *grammatically*, *historically*, *contextually*, and *minutely*.

In addition to these general rules, Bishop Ellicott gives three supplementary ones. The first is, that we should keep in view the peculiar phraseology and style of each writer, so as to let the writer interpret himself. But this rule, the propriety of which is obvious, must be combined with the second and third, which are founded on the character of Holy Scripture, as having a *unity* derived from the action of the presiding Spirit, and as containing a consistent and connected scheme of truth. They are, that we should interpret according to the analogy of Scripture generally, and that we should interpret according to the analogy of faith. This last rule, indeed, requires to be applied with great caution and reverence; and can only be satisfactorily applied by a mind accustomed to the devout and earnest study of Divine truth, as found in the Sacred Records.

PART III.

THE DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY.

SECTION I.

THE NATURE AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD—THE HOLY TRINITY—THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

THE NATURE AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

WE have already considered the evidence of the existence of God afforded by the system of nature, and by the moral constitution to which our conscience bears witness. But while this evidence is ample and conclusive, there are many subjects affecting this glorious Being and His relations to us, on which Natural Theology sheds only a dim and imperfect light. When, however, we turn to the revelation which God has given to us of Himself and His government and purposes,—more especially, when we place ourselves at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ,—many of the mysteries which had perplexed us, and the doubts which had troubled us, are removed; and although our conceptions of God must ever be partial and inadequate, we may yet know Him, and find in that knowledge repose and satisfaction.

The Lord Jesus is emphatically the Revealer of the Father. 'No man,' it is said, 'hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him' (John i. 18). Our Lord Himself affirmed,

'All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father; and no one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any one know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him' (Matt. xi. 27). Passing over, for the present, the deep mystery of the Personal distinctions in the Divine Nature which this declaration implies, let us dwell on the general views of God which the Saviour's teaching presents.

In the very front of these is the *Spirituality* of the Divine Nature. 'God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth' (John iv. 24). To enable us to conceive of spirit, we must fall back on our own consciousness. There is that within us which thinks, and purposes, and acts; and, putting aside all the limitations which our dependent nature involves, we can think of God as a Spirit, self-conscious, possessed of intellect, affections, and will, and acting throughout the universe which He has made.

The *Attributes* of the Divine Nature have been variously classified; and perhaps there is no classification entirely free from difficulties and objections. The most common arrangement is probably that which distributes them into the *natural* and *moral* perfections of God: and although this is obviously open to the objection, that the moral attributes of God are also natural,—that they belong to His very nature and are inseparable from it, though their chief exercise is found in His relation to the intelligent and moral beings that He has formed,—we may, on the whole, accept it.

Among the natural attributes of God, then, we may first mention His *self-existence* and *eternity*. He has revealed Himself by the name, 'I am that I am' (Exod. iii 14). The devout exclamation of the Psalmist is, 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God' (Psalm xc. 2). We can go back, in thought, through countless ages, until we reach the period when first material nature rose into being, and the first created mind glowed with intelligence

and feeling; but we are baffled as we attempt to realise *eternity*, —duration without commencement and without end. But God is the Eternal and Self-Existent Being, possessing life in and of Himself, and the Source of life to everything that lives.

Intimately connected with these attributes is the *immutability* and *absolute perfection* of God. The Divine Nature, existing of itself, with all its resources inherent and essential, cannot be the subject of gradual development. Nor can its moral attributes change. 'I am the Lord; I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed' (Mal. iii. 6).

The *omnipresence* of God is another perfection clearly revealed to us. In the Old Testament it is again and again affirmed. 'Whither,' says the Psalmist, 'shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee' (Psalm cxxxix. 7—12). 'Am I a God at hand,' the Most High inquires by Jeremiah, 'and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord' (Jer. xxiii. 23, 24). And St. Paul, in his address to the Athenians, affirms, 'God is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being' (Acts xvii. 27, 28).

The *omniscience* of God is also impressively set forth in the Divine word. Everything in the whole Universe of being is known to Him. 'There is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do' (Heb. iv. 13). The Psalmist devoutly exclaims, 'O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou

compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo! O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether' (Psalm cxxxix. 1—4). To this attribute of God, in connection with His omnipotence, there is a beautiful reference in His appeal, by the prophet Isaiah, respecting His universal providence and His minute care of His people. When we attempt to realise the fact, that at one and the same instant the Most High regards all that is passing throughout the Universe, and marks the circumstances, the feelings, the acts, of all creatures, our minds are baffled and overpowered. But to assure us of His constant care of individual men, God points us to His creative acts, and affirms that His understanding is without limit and knows no weariness. 'Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding' (Isa. xi. 26—28).

There is one view of the Divine omniscience which may well fill us with reverent awe, and in the attempt fully to apprehend which we feel the weakness of our powers. The Most High knows the past, the present, and the future. The fact is revealed; and here we must be content to rest. That the future is known to God is shown by the existence of prophecy, embracing the acts of voluntary agents: but it is not for us, in our present state, to grapple with every difficulty which this fact involves. We can, indeed, understand, that knowledge is not causal; that the knowledge of something as about to happen does not bring it about. But while this point is clear and obvious, there are mysteries connected with the Divine prescience the solution of which we must leave to a future state of being.

Intimately related to the omniscience of God is His *wisdom*. Wisdom supposes knowledge; but it implies also its right application, so as to secure valuable and important ends by the means best fitted to attain them. Wisdom is seen, among men, in the formation of plans and arrangements, and in calling into exercise the powers and resources necessary to carry them into effect. This attribute is repeatedly ascribed to God in the Holy Scriptures. The Psalmist exclaims, 'O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches' (Psalm civ. 24). Jeremiah writes, 'He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion' (Jer. x. 12). Daniel devoutly says, 'Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His' (Dan. ii. 20). The Apostle Paul, too, in the sublime doxology with which he closes his Epistle to the Romans, speaks of the Most High as '*the only wise God*.' This expression is full of meaning. It implies that all wisdom *centres* in God, and that all wisdom *emanates* from Him. Nor is this all. The loftiest created intellect has only a limited range of thought, and imperfection consequently attaches to its conceptions and plans. But God is *perfectly wise*. His counsels, unfathomable as they are by us,—and His counsels only,—are characterised by absolute wisdom. And the same Apostle, in an earlier part of that Epistle, exclaims, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out!' (Rom. xi. 33.)

The *omnipotence* or *infinite power* of God is another of His perfections. He can do all that He wills to do, His will being regulated, if we may reverently speak so, by His wisdom and His moral perfections. This attribute, too, is repeatedly set forth in Holy Scripture. Our Lord's emphatic declaration is, 'With God all things are possible' (Matt. xix. 26). The prayer of Jeremiah expresses the same sentiment: 'Ah, Lord God, behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by

Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee' (Jer. xxxii. 17). And every devout mind will be ready to re-echo the declaration of Nebuchadnezzar, after his reason had been restored to him:—'He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?' (Dan. iv. 35.) The infinite power of God, revealed in His never-ceasing agency, sustains the Universe in being, and is the source of all the power which created beings possess. He 'upholdeth all things by the word of His power,' and 'giveth' to all creatures 'life, and breath, and all things.' On this ground, as well as on the ground of His other perfections, we should bow before Him with lowly reverence, and while we tremble to place ourselves in an attitude of antagonism to Him, we should seek His favour, protection, and blessing.

CHAPTER II.

THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD (*continued*).

WE have now to dwell on the *moral* perfections of the Divine Nature. These, like all the other attributes of God, are inherent and essential; but they are developed in the government of the intelligent and moral beings whom He has called into existence.

It has been properly remarked, that the moral perfections of God may be summed up in the words HOLINESS and LOVE. Every student of the Scriptures will remember the frequency and the peculiar emphasis with which these attributes are ascribed to the Most High. In the laws which God gave to the Israelites by Moses, we find Him affirming His *holiness*, and on this ground calling upon His people to be holy. 'And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy' (Lev. xix. 1, 2). The Apostle Peter firmly grasped this truth, and made it the basis of an exhortation to Christians to maintain universal rectitude of life and conduct:—'As He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy' (1 Peter i. 15, 16). In the vision of the Divine Majesty afforded to Isaiah, the seraphim bowed before Him, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory' (Isa. vi. 3). And in the visions of the Apocalypse, we find the living creatures, the representatives of creation generally, uttering the anthem of adoration, 'Holy,

holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, which was, and which is, and which is to come' (Rev. iv. 8). So, too, the attribute of *love* is again and again made prominent in the representations of the Divine character found in Holy Writ. It will suffice to quote St. John's emphatic declaration, 'God is love,' and to mark that this is made the ground of an exhortation to believers to cultivate and develop this principle. 'Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love' (1 John iv. 7, 8).

The subject of the Divine *holiness* requires to be approached by us with reverence, and with a consciousness of the imperfection of our powers. If we may attempt to analyse the elements which it comprehends, we may, perhaps, view it as implying, first, an absolute and necessary freedom from every principle or feeling that would involve moral imperfection; secondly, the possession of every principle and affection suited to the nature of God and the relations in which He stands to His creatures; and, thirdly, an intense and unchangeable hatred to all that is morally evil, and a settled complacency in all that is pure and good. In virtue of the essential moral perfection of His nature, the Most High is opposed to all that is impure and wrong; while His character stands as the archetype of all that is morally beautiful and good.

Intimately related to the holiness of God, and forming, to some extent, our development of it, is His *justice*. This attribute appears in the character of the precepts which He has given to His rational creatures, and in all the acts of His moral administration. It is affirmed in Holy Scripture with the greatest distinctness and force. The Psalmist declares, 'The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works' (Psalm cxlv. 17). One of the anthems of the glorified to which the Apostle John listened in the visions of the Apocalypse, gave prominence to this attribute:—'Great and marvellous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are

Thy ways, Thou King of the ages' (Rev. xv. 3). All the Divine requirements are characterised by perfect rectitude and equity. 'The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good' (Rom. vii. 12). And, more especially, the justice of God will be manifested in the rewards and punishments which He will at last dispense according to the character and conduct of men. Retribution, it is solemnly affirmed, belongs to Him, and, in its perfect form, to Him only. 'Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the Lord' (Rom. xii. 19). So, too, we are assured, that all the judicial decisions of God will be characterised by the strictest impartiality. This truth is dwelt upon by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, with deep interest. Having spoken of the last day as 'the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' he states the principles upon which that judgment will proceed, and which the Omniscient One will apply with perfect accuracy to the varying circumstances of the probation of each individual; and then he adds, 'For there is no respect of persons with God' (Rom. ii. 11).

Another moral perfection of God, necessarily implied in His holiness, but which may be separately dwelt upon, is His *truth* and *fidelity*. His declarations are all true and certain. He cannot deceive; He 'cannot lie' (Titus. i. 2; Heb. vi. 18). 'The Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations' (Psalm. c. 5). And He is *faithful* to all His promises. This feature of the Divine character is dwelt upon by the Sacred Writers with deep interest, and is placed in most instructive and encouraging combination with the provisions of the scheme of grace in Christ. 'God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord' (1 Cor. i. 9). 'Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for He is faithful that promised' (Heb. x. 24. See, also, 1 Cor. x. 13; 1 Thess. v. 24; 2 Thess. iii. 3). Thus, as we survey the rich and varied blessings offered to us in Christ Jesus, we can rest in the assurance that they shall all be ours if indeed we cleave to Him.

Passing to the great attribute of *love*, which is so prominent in the Divine character, we may view it as assuming several forms. In the general form of *goodness*, it is manifested in the provision made for the happiness of created beings. We may confidently affirm that God takes pleasure in diffusing happiness; though, in the case of moral agents, this must ever be connected with the higher considerations arising from the sacredness of rectitude and duty. But the truth is certain, that God is *benignant;* and, while His moral displeasure rests on all sin, and on those who practise it in wilful opposition to the truth which they possess, there is no feeling that partakes of malignity or selfish irritation in the Divine Mind. The declarations of Scripture on this subject are most encouraging and impressive. 'The Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works' (Psalm cxlv. 9). 'The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord' (Psalm xxxiii. 5). 'O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men. For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness' (Psalm cvii. 8, 9).

Towards man as fallen and guilty, the love of God has assumed the forms of *long-suffering* and *mercy*. Instead of instantly visiting upon us our offences, or abruptly terminating our moral probation, God bears long with those who trifle with His authority, and even repel the overtures of salvation and peace. And He seeks our recovery. The scheme of redemption by Christ Jesus is the development of His gracious counsel; and we may reverently say that He takes pleasure in welcoming to His favour all who penitently fly to the appointed Refuge. In the revelation of His character made to Moses, in answer to his prayer, 'I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory,' He gave prominence to His forbearance and mercy, though He also affirmed His hatred to cherished sin. 'And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity

and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty' (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7). And the Apostle Paul has beautifully spoken of the *benignity* of God to man, as manifested in the provisions of redemption: 'But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and His love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life' (Tit. iii. 4—7).

We are thus taught to consider the love of God as assuming the form of *grace* to man,—not only in inviting his return from the path of disobedience, but in the rich and ample provisions of blessing for all who accept His mercy in Christ Jesus. The love of God pours itself forth in abundant communications of peace, and comfort, and purity, and strength to all believers; and the whole economy of salvation is the development of His inherent graciousness. St. Paul has emphatically expressed this sentiment in his Epistle to the Ephesians:—'But God, being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus' (Ephes. ii. 4—7).

Still further, the love of God assumes the form of *complacency* towards those who come to Him in Christ Jesus, and yield themselves up to His service, while they seek to be conformed to His own character. The ancient Scriptures abound in declarations of the special and complacent regard of God to those who are devoted to Him. 'He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy' (Psalm cxlvii. 10, 11). 'The

Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them' (Psalm cxlv. 18, 19). 'But know ye that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself' (Psalm iv. 3). And to crown the statements of Holy Scripture on this subject, our Lord Himself, the Incarnate Son, has assured us that His love towards His obedient and devoted people resembles the ineffable complacency which the Eternal Father takes in Him; while the Father Himself regards them with special love as united to His Son. 'Even as the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you: abide ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love' (John xv. 9, 10).

Such, then, are the perfections of the Divine Nature, as revealed to us by God Himself. These perfections, though they may be considered distinctly, exist in intimate and inseparable union in Him, and they are developed in ever-varying manifestations in His providential and moral government of His creatures. As we reverently contemplate them, we feel that it becomes us to lie low at His footstool, and yet that in Christ we may look up to Him with confidence and claim Him as *our God*. Beholding His glory as it is revealed to us in the face of Jesus Christ, we see that in Him all excellences centre, and that He is the Source of all that is right, and pure, and good throughout the Universe.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOLY TRINITY.

IN the revelation which God has been pleased to vouchsafe to us of Himself, we find the Unity of His nature distinctly affirmed. There is one God, one Eternal and Almighty Being, the Source of all existence, the Creator and Sustainer of universal nature. 'Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord He is God; there is none else beside Him' (Deut. iv. 35). 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord' (Deut. vi. 4).

But while the Unity of the Divine essence is thus emphatically set forth, we are taught that in that essence there are mysterious Personal distinctions; and we are led to adore the one Jehovah as the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST. One of the most frequent appellations of the Most High in the Old Testament is *Jehovah Elohim;* and while the former term implies the essential unity of God, as the self-existent Being, the very form of the latter indicates that plurality in some sense belongs to Him. In this view the latter of the two declarations just cited is remarkable and impressive:—'Jehovah, our Elohim, is one Jehovah.' Allusions to the Trinity of Persons in the one Godhead occur throughout the ancient revelation. The formula of blessing which Aaron and his sons were commanded to use reminds us of this lofty mystery: 'And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be

gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put My Name upon the children of Israel: and I will bless them' (Num. vi. 22—27). So, too, in one of the visions with which Isaiah was favoured, the seraphim whom he beheld, and to whose worship he listened, adored the Triune Name:—'In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory' (Isa. vi. 1—3). This passage becomes yet more striking in its bearing on the truth before us, when it is placed in connection with the comment of St. John, who refers it to the glory of the Lord Jesus: 'These things said Isaiah, because he saw His glory; and he spake of Him' (John xii. 41).

It is not within the plan of this work to enumerate all the references to the great doctrine of the Trinity in Unity which are found in the Old Testament. It may suffice to remark, that all the passages which relate to the Son and the Holy Spirit as Personal Subsistences imply this truth. Among the former we must place those in which 'the Angel of Jehovah,' emphatically so designated, is spoken of. He is not an ordinary angel; for although sent by the Father, and revealing Him to men, He claims for Himself the incommunicable name of Jehovah, and stands arrayed in the loftiest attributes of eternal Godhead (Gen. xxii. 11—12; 15—18; collated with Heb. vi. 13—14. Exod. iii. 2—6). So, too, in one of the most remarkable of the Messianic Psalms, the august Person who, after His rejection by men, should be enthroned as the King of Zion, entitled to universal homage, and worthy of unbounded confidence, is addressed as THE SON, standing in a most intimate and unique relation to the Father. 'I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen

for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.' And then follows the exhortation, 'Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him' (Psalm ii. 7—8; 10—12).

But it is in the Scriptures of the New Testament that the truth before us is brought out in the clearest manner. The impressive scene which followed the baptism of our Lord illustrates it. As the Lord Jesus came up from the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him as a dove, while the voice of the Eternal Father proclaimed, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Still more important, in its bearing upon this subject, is the commission given to the Apostles by our Lord, after His resurrection from the dead:—'Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). In the baptismal formula, thus solemnly enjoined, there is a recognition of the *unity* of the Divine Nature: there is the one Name, comprehending, if we may reverently say so, the adorable Three. Then, too, the *Personal distinctions* in the Godhead are indicated: for there can be no question that the Father and the Son are referred to as Persons; and if so the Holy Ghost must also be a Person. And further, the *relation* of the Persons is set forth by the order in which they are named. Mysterious, indeed, and ineffable are the internal relations of the Divine Nature; but they are shadowed forth in these significant words.

The Apostolic benediction forms another striking testimony to the truth before us. 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all' (2 Cor. xiii. 14). The use of this formula, at the close of our Christian assemblies, marks the importance which

the Christian Church has ever attached to this truth, while it recognises the rich supplies of grace, and peace, and strength, provided for us under the evangelical covenant. In many other passages of the writings of the Apostles, we find the Holy Trinity referred to. Writing to the Corinthians St. Paul says, 'Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God' (1 Cor. xii. 4—6). In his Epistle to the Ephesians, having spoken of the crucified and risen Saviour, he adds, 'For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father' (Ephes. ii. 18). To the Thessalonians he writes, 'And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ' (2 Thess. iii. 5). And the Apostle Peter inscribes his first Epistle 'to the elect who are sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ' (1 Peter i. 1—2).

But it must not be supposed that the Scriptural evidence of the great doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is limited to the passages in which the adorable Persons are mentioned in combination. The vast mass of evidence which affirms the true and proper Deity of the Son of God, and that also which establishes the Divinity and Personality of the Holy Spirit, support this truth. But these topics must be reserved for subsequent Chapters.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SON OF GOD.

IN reverently contemplating the mysterious Personal distinctions of the one Divine Nature, we have seen that the Most High has revealed Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In further meditating on this theme, we have to inquire into the intimations of Scripture respecting *the Son of God*, the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity. It is our privilege to behold Him in His incarnate state, and to listen to His own declarations respecting Himself and His relation to the Father; and then to dwell on the inspired utterances of His Apostles respecting His Person and work. These declarations enable us, in some degree, to rise to the contemplation of Him in His pre-existent state, as well as to appreciate the mysterious grandeur of His Person, even when His glory was veiled, and He appeared among us as the Man of sorrows.

It is well known that the Gospel according to St. John is peculiarly rich in those sayings of our Lord which refer to His unique relation to the Father. But it is not in this Gospel only that such sayings are found. One of the most remarkable of them is that recorded by St. Matthew and St. Luke:—'All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him' (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22). The testimony of St. Matthew's Gospel, indeed, to the personal dignity of our Lord is ample and varied. Not to dwell on the Sermon on the Mount, in which the Saviour speaks with the authority of the

Supreme Lawgiver, and claims to be the Arbiter of the eternal destinies of men, St. Matthew has related the memorable confession of Peter, which our Lord so emphatically approved, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;' and has also recorded the ground on which the Jewish Sanhedrim condemned our Lord as a blasphemer,—that He replied in the affirmative to the solemn appeal of the High Priest, 'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God' (Matt. xxvi. 63). Nor should it be overlooked, that St. Matthew has given to us our Lord's final commission to His Apostles, containing the baptismal formula, which so distinctly recognises His own relation, as the Son, to the Eternal Father.

But we turn to the Gospel of St. John, and we find, among the earliest of our Lord's recorded sayings, that He spoke of Himself as 'the Only Begotten Son,'—an expression which marks His unique relation to the Father. 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him. He that believeth on Him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God' (John iii. 16—18). In our Lord's controversies with the unbelieving Jews, He repeatedly claimed to be *the Son*, in a sense altogether peculiar and unique. It may suffice to refer, in illustration of this statement, to His words recorded in John v. 17—22. Vindicating His action in giving soundness and health to an afflicted man on the Sabbath, He affirmed, 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work,' thus, in effect, affirming that His own agency, like that of the Father, was all-pervading and ceaseless. The import attached to these words by the Jews around Him is shown by the remark of the sacred historian: 'For this cause, therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only brake the Sabbath, but also called God His own Father, making Him-

self equal with God.' But our Lord continued to address them:—'Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and greater works than these will He show Him, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.'

It is worthy of our attention, also, that the Lord Jesus, in His discourses recorded by St. John, repeatedly affirmed His own *pre-existence* and *eternity*. He said to Nicodemus, 'And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven' (John iii. 13). Alluding to the manna with which the people of God were sustained in the wilderness, He spoke of Himself as 'the true bread out of heaven,' and added, 'For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world.' And when the Jews who stood around Him exclaimed, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread,' He replied, 'I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst' (John vi. 32—35). And on a subsequent occasion, when he had referred to the lively interest with which the patriarch Abraham looked forward to His day, and the Jews objected, 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?' He answered, with great solemnity and power, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am' (John viii. 56—58).

A special interest attaches to our Lord's utterances as He approached the close of His earthly career; and every devout mind will linger on the prayer which He offered up just before He left the supper-chamber to enter upon the solitudes of Gethsemane. That prayer contains the most emphatic references to His eternal relation to the Father. 'And now, O

Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was' (John xvii. 5). 'Father, that which Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world' (John xvii. 24).

To these declarations of our Lord Himself we may add a few of the most striking and comprehensive statements of the Apostles, on the subject of His original and essential glory as the Son of God. Among these the opening of St. John's Gospel holds an important place. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that hath been made.' 'And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth' (John i. 1—3; 14). Here the Apostle carries us back in thought to the depths of eternity, and teaches us that 'in the beginning,' before material nature was called into being, and before any created mind glowed with thought and feeling, the Word existed in intimate union with the Father, and one with Him in His essential perfections. He, too, is to be acknowledged as the Creator of all things. But this adorable Person assumed our nature in its lowliness and weakness, so that His Apostles could gaze upon His glory in its softened and milder form, and yet could recognise it, when the revealing Spirit banished the mists that once rested upon their minds, as 'the glory of the Only begotten from the Father.'

The introduction to the first Epistle of St. John is equally striking and impressive. 'That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us);

that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ' (1 John i. 1—3). Here we trace the characteristics of eternal Deity, as belonging to Him who, in the fulness of time, appeared on earth to redeem us; and yet we perceive that this august Person was distinct from the Father, though one with Him in nature, and power, and glory. He was 'from the beginning'; He was the 'eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us'; He had shared from eternity in the high prerogative of the Father, to possess life in and of Himself. And He is the Source of life to all. His energy communicates and sustains it; and, more especially, does He impart to the devout spirit that hidden life which enables it to yield a spiritual obedience to the Divine precepts.

We may next turn to the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In contrast with former dispensations, in which the Most High spoke to men by His prophets, gradually and partially disclosing His purposes of grace, the Apostle places the glory of the Christian economy as that in which *the Son* Himself has appeared, to shed on us the light of truth, to offer a perfect sacrifice for human guilt, and then to rise to His mediatorial throne, to sway a sceptre of righteousness and grace over our world, until every hostile power shall bow before Him. 'God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the Prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they' (Heb. i. 1—4). Here, as in the writings of St. John, our minds are carried back to the glory of the Son before He came into our world of sin and sorrow. He appears

to the view of our faith in all the majesty of the Creator and Lord of the Universe; to Him we are to look up as even now sustaining the entire fabric of created nature; and we are reverently to conceive of Him as the out-beaming of the Father's glory, and the express image of His inscrutable essence. Light is frequently referred to in the Holy Scriptures as the chosen emblem of the perfect intelligence and purity of God. But here this illustration is applied to a subject which, above all others, is sacred and mysterious, and of which the human mind can form only a faint and inadequate conception,—the relation of the Son to the Eternal Father. He is the effulgence, the outstreaming, of the uncreated Light. All the Divine perfections belong to Him; and this by virtue of a relation grounded in the Divine essence and inseparable from it.

There is another passage of the Apostolic writings which claims our special attention when we attempt to raise our thoughts to the glory of our Lord's pre-existent state. Addressing the Philippians, St. Paul says, 'Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Philip. ii. 5—11). The full import of this sublime passage is beyond the apprehension of the loftiest human mind; but some of the views which it suggests are clear and striking. It affirms the Divine glory of the Redeemer before He appeared on earth. He was 'in the form of God'; He subsisted from eternity in all the majesty of the Father; and when the angelic hosts had been called into being by His power, He was the Object of their adoration and love.

He had a just and rightful claim to be equal with the Father; but He 'emptied Himself,'—He laid aside that glory in which He had appeared from eternity,—'taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.' The profound truth is thus suggested to us that, by assuming the nature of man, the Son became the 'righteous Servant' of the Father. For man is, by his very nature, a servant. As the creature of God, he is bound to obey His injunctions and to seek His glory. And thus when the Son took our nature into union with His own eternal Personality, He assumed the form of a servant of God, and thus prepared the way for the yet deeper humiliation of the garden and the cross.

These are a few of the Scriptural testimonies to the original and eternal glory of the Son of God, and His relation to the Father in the Triune Godhead. The various lines of evidence in support of the truth, that in the Person of our Lord there was the union of the Divine and human natures, do not strictly belong to our present subject. They will be adverted to when we have to speak of the Person of Christ, in our endeavour to develop the mediatorial scheme.

CHAPTER V.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

OUR reverent thought must now be directed to the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity. The Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, is to be adored and loved, together with the Father and the Son, in the unity of the Divine Nature.

There is abundant evidence that the Holy Spirit is spoken of in the Scriptures as a *Person*, and that the phrase does not intimate merely an influence exerted by God. The baptismal formula, which has been already considered, may be appealed to as a striking proof of this:—'Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost' (Matt. xxviii. 19). It is unquestionable that the Father and the Son are Persons; and it would be in the highest degree incongruous to interpret the Holy Ghost as an influence put forth by the Father. Personal acts, too, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. This is especially the case in our Lord's address to His Apostles before He suffered; and the manner in which He speaks of the Paraclete, the Comforter, whose coming would more than compensate for the withdrawal of His own visible presence, clearly recognises Him as a Person. 'I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: ye know Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you' (John xiv. 16, 17). 'These things have I spoken to you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send

in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you' (John xiv. 25, 26). 'But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me' (John xv. 26). 'Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you' (John xvi. 7). 'Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth; for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things oever He shall hear, these shall He speak; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you' (John xvi. 13, 14).

These words of our Lord are so clear and explicit on the point before us, that it is needless to adduce many passages from the writings of the Apostles. It will suffice to refer to St. Paul's first address to the Jews with whom he conversed on his arrival at Rome as a prisoner, and to his remarkable words when writing to the Church at Corinth. To the former he said, 'Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying, Go thou unto this people, and say, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see and shall in no wise perceive' (Acts xxviii. 26). In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, after referring to the ample disclosures of truth and privilege vouchsafed to believers under the Christian economy, he says, 'But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God' (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. See also ver. 12—14).

It will be obvious, that many of the passages now referred to, while they evince the *personality* of the Holy Ghost, imply also His *true* and *proper Deity*. We may refer, especially, to the baptismal formula,—to the promise of our Lord, that the

Spirit should not only be *near* to all His people to succour and comfort them, but should even be *in* them,—and to the reasoning of St. Paul in the passage last cited. Other Scriptural evidences of this truth readily suggest themselves. The address of St. Peter to Ananias clearly implies the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. 'Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God' (Acts v. 3—5). And while the Apostle Peter writes, 'For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Peter i. 21), St. Paul, adverting to the same topic, says, 'Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work' (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

Into the profoundly mysterious subject of the internal relations of the Divine Nature it is not for us curiously to inquire: we can only accept and ponder the intimations conveyed in the expressions found in Holy Scripture. We are again and again taught, that the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity is the Son of the Father,—God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; and we are taught, too, that the Holy Spirit *proceedeth* from the Father. For the words of our Lord recorded by St. John, which speak of the procession of the Spirit, have been properly understood by the Church in every age as referring, not to His coming into this world, as the Agent and Representative of the Lord Jesus,—for this is referred to in a separate clause,—but to His relation to the Father in the Triune Godhead. 'But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me.' We accept, too, the doctrine held by Western Christendom, in opposition to the view of the Eastern, or Greek, Church, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. For although there is no distinct and

explicit statement to this effect in Holy Scripture, yet the Spirit is so emphatically spoken of as 'the Spirit of Christ,' 'the Spirit of the Son,' that we may properly regard this as suggested and implied.

This is not the place to speak at length of the work of the Holy Spirit in carrying out the purposes of the economy of redemption. That subject will naturally engage our attention, when we have to dwell on the mediatorial scheme and the blessings of the Christian salvation. But we cannot close these meditations on the Holy Trinity, without a devout recognition of the blessed Spirit, as moving on our hearts to lead us in penitence and faith to Christ,—as imparting to us, when we embrace the Saviour, the peace and joy of sonship to God, and that inward life which enables us to obey the Divine will,—as succouring and comforting us under the conflicts and changes of this probationary life,—and as forming the earnest of our perfect and consummated glory. His gracious influence is to be cherished by us with reverence and gratitude; and we should ever bear in mind the charge of the Apostle, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption' (Ephes. iv. 30).

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

THE Christian revelation amply confirms the truth which Natural Theology suggests, that God is the Ruler of the Universe which He has brought into existence, and the arrangements of which evince His power and wisdom. He sits upon the throne; while all other beings wait upon Him, accomplish His purposes, or are controlled by His power.

The government of God embraces His providential oversight and care of His creatures, and the moral administration which He exercises over all intelligent and moral beings. It is to the former of these subjects that our attention must now be directed.

In contemplating the providential government of God, we have first to regard Him as *sustaining* the Universe which He has formed, and *upholding in life all animated beings.* It is declared of the Eternal Son, by whom the Father made the worlds, that 'He upholdeth all things by the word of His power.' In the address of St. Paul to the assembled Athenians, we have the impressive declaration, that God, the universal Creator and Lord, 'giveth to all life, and breath, and all things' (Acts xvii. 25). His presence fills immensity, and His agency is everywhere put forth, our own continued life and all our powers being derived from Him. 'He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being' (v. 27).

The providence of God is also seen in the *supply of the wants of the unintelligent creation.* 'The eyes of all wait upon Thee;

and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing' (Psalm cxlv. 15, 16). In some of the discourses of our Lord, which appeal most strongly to our human sympathies, this truth is beautifully brought out. He points us to 'the birds of the heaven,' which 'sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns,' and then He adds, 'Your heavenly Father feedeth them' (Matt. vi. 26).

But the providential government of God is more especially to be viewed in its relation to *mankind*. The events which affect the career and destiny of *nations* are under His control. He raises up, from time to time, men whose strength of character and extensive influence largely determine the course of things around them; and He often interposes to bring down the lofty and powerful, and to frustrate their schemes and hopes. When Sennacherib boasted of his power and resources, claiming to be independent and absolute, the declaration of Jehovah respecting him showed that he was permitted to be an instrument of judgment to the nations, and affirmed that the Hand which had given him power would interpose for his overthrow and destruction (Isa. xxxvii. 23—29). Impressive is the view which Isaiah gives of the agency of God as blasting the hopes, and frustrating the schemes, of many of the great ones of the earth, so as even to bring them down to impotence and ruin. He 'bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown; yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth; and He shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble' (Isa. xl. 23, 24).

It is instructive, also, to mark how God sometimes *overrules* the wickedness and malice of men to bring about beneficent results, and to place individuals in positions in which they can largely influence others for good. The case of Joseph may be adduced in illustration of this statement. When he made himself known to his brethren, he sought to relieve, in some degree, the feeling of self-reproach which their past conduct

towards him could not but inspire by the consideration, that God had sent him into Egypt to preserve life. 'God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither but God: and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt' (Gen. xlv. 7, 8).

But the providence of God is further to be viewed in its relation to *individual men*, however humble their position, and however limited their influence. In the devotional poetry of the Jewish Church this consolatory truth is again and again affirmed, in connection with the special interest which the Most High takes in those who fear and love Him. 'The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry' (Psalm xxxiv. 15). 'Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. . . . The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore' (Psalm cxxi. 4; 7, 8). But it is in the discourses of our Lord that the providential care of God over individuals is most impressively set forth. He teaches us that even the humblest of the brute creation share in the regard of God, and then He adds, that man calls forth a deeper interest in the Divine Mind, and that even the minutest circumstance that affects us is marked by God and is under His control. 'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not: ye are of more value than many sparrows' (Luke xii. 6, 7). In His Sermon on the Mount, after warning His people against the love and eager pursuit of wealth, He guards them also against distressing solicitude as to the supply of their temporal wants, by dwelling on the universal agency of God, and His constant care of all who seek His favour and devote themselves to His service. 'Be not, therefore, anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you' (Matt. vi. 31—33).

It may sometimes, perhaps, occur to us, that it is beneath the majesty of the Eternal God, who upholds and rules the whole Universe of being, to care for individual men, and to mark every circumstance that affects them. But, on the contrary, there is nothing that affords a more impressive view of the infinite resources of the Divine Mind than this constant regard to individuals. For it implies that God observes with interest all that bears on each one of the hundreds of millions of our race,—that He does this, not in successive moments, but at one and the same instant,—and that He has exercised this oversight without intermission throughout all the ages. Only an Infinite Mind, that knows no exhaustion, weariness, or perplexity, is capable of this all-comprehending and unremitting care.

This precious doctrine of the special Providence of God is to be connected with the truth, that He is accessible to us in prayer, and that He invites us to make known to Him all our requests. Thus Christianity opens to us a refuge from the assaults of worldly anxiety, and affords us solace under all the sorrows and trials of life. Our Lord Himself has taught us the efficacy of prayer, assuring us of the readiness of our Father in heaven to give all things that are really good to them that ask Him; and His Apostles encourage us to draw near to God, to tell Him all our wants, and hopes, and fears. St. Peter invites us to 'cast all our anxiety upon Him, because He careth for us;' and St. Paul has left us the charge and promise, 'In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus' (Philip. iv. 6, 7).

CHAPTER VII.

THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

IN contemplating the government of God, we have now to consider the moral administration which He exercises over all rational and moral beings, and, in particular, His moral administration of our world.

We have seen that conscience naturally leads us to conceive of a Moral Ruler of the Universe. It recognises the reality and importance of the distinctions of right and wrong; it recognises, too, the obligation resting upon us to do that which is right, and to turn away from everything that is wrong; and, to use the striking words of Mr. Wace, it enforces the conviction, 'not only that certain consequences will follow our evil deeds, but that we deserve certain penalties, and that we must expect them to be inflicted because we deserve them.' All this implies that we are living under a moral constitution, presided over by the Author of our being, who will vindicate at last the claims of rectitude and order.

But the Christian revelation places the moral government of God before us distinctly and impressively. The great principles of rectitude are defined in His law, and enforced by His authority. The duties which we owe to Himself, to our fellow-men, and to ourselves, are traced out in the successive revelations which He has given, and are now placed in the clearest light by the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles. While certain principles and acts are recognised as right in themselves, they come to us with the sanction of *the will of God;* and to do that will cheerfully, uniformly, and perfectly, is the highest object to which

we can aspire. The restoration of man to a state of holiness, so that he shall maintain a course of practical obedience to the Divine will, is ever represented as the great result to which the economy of redemption and all the operations of Divine grace are directed. It will suffice to quote two passages from the writings of St. Paul:—'For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them' (Ephes. ii. 10). 'For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works' (Titus ii. 11—14).

It is one feature of the moral government of God that His displeasure rests on those who defy His authority and practise iniquity, while His complacency is called forth by piety and rectitude. On the one hand we read, 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy' (Psalm cxlvii. 11); and on the other, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness' (Rom. i. 18). We are not, indeed, to conceive of the wrath of God as involving any degree of malignity, or as being a turbulent passion, like that which sometimes agitates the human breast, but as the deep and intense moral displeasure of a perfectly holy Being and a righteous Governor who hates and punishes sin. And the declaration of the Apostle teaches us, that the knowledge of the truth only heightens the guilt of those who resist it and live in the violation of their duties.

We are thus led to the great principle which characterises the moral government of God. That principle is *retribution*. We are taught, in the most emphatic manner, that God 'will render to every man according to his works.' The apparent

inequalities of the Divine administration will be rectified at last; and the perfect righteousness of that administration will be vindicated and manifested. In one remarkable passage of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul has set forth the principles on which the judicial decisions of God will proceed,—principles which He only can apply to the infinitely varied circumstances of probation in which individuals have been placed, and which He will apply with strict impartiality. He speaks of 'the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works,' and then he adds, 'To them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for there is no respect of persons with God' (Rom. ii. 7—11). The leading elements of a pious character are here set forth, as it might be developed under various dispensations, and with very different degrees of religious light. A man, following the gracious leadings of God, and repenting of his ingratitude and sin (see v. 4), strives to do that which is good, and *perseveres* in a course of upright and benevolent effort, notwithstanding every inducement to forsake it. And this course of 'well-doing' is sustained by a desire of the lofty, spiritual, undying pleasures which are to be realised in a higher state, where God Himself will reward and honour the soul that has devoutly sought Him. Every such character 'obeys the truth': he welcomes its light, bows to its injunctions, and follows its guidance. The degree in which the truth of God is disclosed varies under different dispensations, and varies, indeed, in the case of individual men, under the same dispensation: but all who will be finally approved surrender their hearts to its power, seek the blessings which it holds forth, and strive to walk in the path of duty. The course of the Apostle's argument re-

quired him to present these principles in their most general form. He is stating the general rule of the Divine judicial procedure; and, leaving it to the infinite wisdom and unerring discrimination of God to apply this rule to individual cases, he teaches us that they will be admitted to life and blessedness, who have been characterised by the love of truth, as far as they possessed it, and by submission to its dictates,—by a practical regard to duty,—by perseverance in obedience,—and by a preference of spiritual good to that which is low and sensual.

The leading features of the character of those who will be at last rejected are also pointed out in this remarkable passage. They are 'factious'; they refuse to bow to those intimations of the Divine will which have been given to them, and to sacrifice their own inclinations to the requirements of the Most High. They are ready to enter into controversy with their Maker, and to demand why they should be restrained from this or that indulgence to which their passions prompt them. Cherishing this temper of mind, they 'do not obey the truth'; they refuse to follow its guidance, to revere its precepts, and to seek the blessings which it announces. Thus resisting and counteracting the truth, they 'obey unrighteousness'; they are the willing servants of sin, and are hurried onward in a course of transgression by their ungodly tendencies. And thus they 'work evil'; they practise that which is wrong and morally base, rejecting the just claims of God, and in too many instances trampling on the rights of their fellows. On such characters there will fall, at length, 'wrath and indignation'; and when they reach the close of their probation, and still more when the moral history of this world is wound up, they will experience tribulation and anguish such as no words can properly express.

Such are the leading principles which the Apostle affirms as determining the judicial decisions of God. The application of them belongs to Him alone. The gracious arrangements of the mediatorial economy do not set them aside, but are taken up into the Divine estimate of character. To all to whom the

Gospel is made known, 'the truth' which they are to 'obey' is emphatically that which relates to the Lord Jesus, as the appointed Refuge of the guilty, and the Source of a new inward life; while the faith that embraces Him will always lead to a course of practical obedience to the Divine will.

Section II.

MAN—HIS ORIGINAL AND PRESENT STATE.

CHAPTER I.

THE NATURE OF MAN—HIS ORIGINAL STATE.

IN considering the truths which Natural Theology embraces, we have dwelt on the personality of man, as evinced by the faculties of the human mind, and especially by the power of *will*, and by the convictions and anticipations of *conscience*. But we have now to think of the nature of man, as it is placed before us in the Christian revelation.

Man is 'the offspring of God.' This truth, which St. Paul affirmed in his address to the Athenians, and which, indeed, he referred to as having been enunciated by some of their own poets, is recognised throughout the Scriptures. Man, we are taught in the opening chapter of Genesis, was brought into being by God, as the crown of this terrestrial creation. 'And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth' (Gen. i. 26). The position of man in relation to this earth is here clearly marked out. He was to have dominion over all the inferior creatures, and to rule, to some extent, material nature. And the presence of man on this earth, is essential to

the completeness of the system. For without him there would be no being to whom its displays of wisdom, and power, and goodness could minister instruction or impart enjoyment. There would be no one who could observe its processes, trace its laws, and survey its scenes of loveliness, so as to rise to a devout acknowledgment of Him who has formed the whole, and whose unseen hand sustains and controls it. However lengthened the period during which this earth was in existence before man was created, that period was one of gradual preparation for his appearance, and the whole constitution of this world was arranged in reference to him.

The comprehensive statement of the Divine Record is that man was made 'in the image of God.' This implies, first of all, that he was constituted an *intelligent* and *moral agent*, capable of reflecting the intellectual and moral glories of God Himself. He possesses a *mind*, a *spirit*, distinct in its nature from his physical organization, though now in most intimate union with it, and using it as the instrument of its perceptions of external nature and its action upon it. The evidence of this truth, afforded by the facts of our consciousness, has been already adduced. And we find it repeatedly affirmed in Holy Scripture. 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it' (Eccles. xii. 7). In narrating the raising of the daughter of Jairus, St. Luke says, 'And her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately' (Luke viii. 55). Our Lord Himself, in His discourses, distinctly recognises this truth. 'Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell' (Matt. x. 28). Nor should we overlook the fact, that in Gethsemane He expressed the deep and bitter anguish which oppressed His spirit in the words, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death' (Matt. xxvi. 38), and that His last utterance on the cross was, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit' (Luke xxiii. 46). In the writings of the *Apostles* and their companions, too, this truth of man's spiritual

nature is again and again affirmed. St. Luke, speaking of the second visit of Paul and Barnabas to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, describes their teaching in the words, 'Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God' (Acts xiv. 22). In the letter sent by the Apostles and elders assembled at Jerusalem, to the Gentile Churches, they speak of the Judaizing teachers as having 'troubled them with words, subverting their souls' (Acts xv. 24); and St. Paul writes to the Romans, 'God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son' (Rom. i. 9).

It is held, indeed, by some, that the nature of man is threefold; and stress is laid by those who take this view, on the prayer of St. Paul for the Thessalonians: 'And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit, and soul, and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thess. v. 23). This passage, however, must be viewed in connection with those cited above, in several of which the *soul* is recognised as that which thinks and wills, that which forms the seat of personality, and which survives the dissolution of the body. And when the general tenor of Scripture is kept in view, it seems more consistent to regard the Apostle, in the passage in question, not as indicating that the spirit of man is, in its nature, distinct from the soul, but rather as accumulating terms to give emphasis to the sentiment, that all the powers of our complex nature—our intellectual energies, our affections, our will, and our physical system—are to be pervaded by the sanctifying influence of God, and to be consecrated to His service. The passage is thus analogous, in one respect, to the first and great commandment: —'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength' (Matt xii. 30).

But 'the image of God,' in which man was created, while it included the possession of a spiritual nature, capable of reflecting the intellectual and moral glories of God Himself, implied

also that he did actually reflect those glories. His understanding was filled with spiritual light; his heart glowed with pure and holy affections. "God made man upright" (Eccles. vii. 29). There was no principle in his nature contrary to purity and rectitude; though he was capable of transgressing, and, alas! did actually transgress, the Divine precepts, and thus brought ruin on himself and his race. The references to the image of God in the New Testament sufficiently establish this more comprehensive meaning. St. Paul writes to the Colossians, 'Ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him' (Col. iii. 9, 10); and to the Ephesians he says, 'That ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man which waxeth corrupt, after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth' (Ephes. iv, 22—24).

The moral image of God has now been lost by man in his natural state; but the grand feature of his spiritual nature remains, and that nature may be restored, as St. Paul teaches us, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, so as again to reflect the holiness of Jehovah and enjoy communion with Him. It is instructive to observe that when, after the flood, the Most High permitted to man to use as food the flesh of some of the inferior animals, He guarded the sanctity of human life by the solemn declaration, 'And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man' (Gen. ix. 5, 6).

The nature of man is everywhere represented in Scripture as possessed of a high and unspeakable *value*. Our Lord Himself has recognised this when speaking of the Providence of our Father in heaven; for, after adverting to the care of God over

the humblest of the brute creation, He adds, 'Ye are of more value than many sparrows' (Luke xii. 7). So, too, in His Sermon on the Mount, He said, 'Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?' (Matt. vi. 26). Though in comparison of the vast fabric of the material Universe, any individual man may appear to be little, yet God has set His heart upon him to visit and to magnify him. It was in the spirit of devout gratitude to God for His distinguishing regard to man, that the Psalmist exclaimed, 'When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour' (Psalm viii. 3—5). Every individual of our race is permitted and encouraged to approach God with the words, 'Our Father which art in heaven'; and this, of itself, shows the importance of our nature. But the crowning distinction of that nature is, that the Son of God has assumed it, has taken it into indissoluble union with His own eternal Personality, and that, through Him, we may become, in a yet higher sense, 'the sons of God,' and thus, too, may be 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.'

CHAPTER II.

THE FALL.

THE Scriptural narrative teaches us that man was placed in a state of probation. While he was free from moral corruption, and was possessed of the essential principles of rectitude, these principles were, for a while, to be tested, and thus, had he continued faithful, to be matured and perfected.

The special prohibition under which our first parents were laid was one calculated to call into exercise their self-control, their reverence for the Divine authority, and their love to God, even when all the reasons of His injunctions were not perfectly clear to them. Had these principles been maintained, and the prohibition observed, they would not only have stood in the Divine favour, but would have risen to a state of confirmed and established goodness.

But they fell. Eve, yielding to the solicitations of the tempter, took of the forbidden fruit; and then Adam, not deceived, as Eve was, but apprehending fully the momentous character of the act he was about to commit, cast in his lot with his wife, and thus deliberately renounced the Divine friendship. 'Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression' (1 Tim. ii. 14).

In the narrative of Genesis, the tempter appears as 'the serpent'; but it is clear, from the whole tenor of Scripture, that this animal was the instrument of a great fallen intelligence, who stands at the head of the powers of darkness. In allusion to the history of the fall, the leader of the fallen angels

is spoken of as 'the great dragon, the old serpent, the deceiver of the whole world' (Rev. xii. 9); and in another place as 'the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan' (Rev. xx. 2). But besides this, Satan is represented as having, by his fatal deception and falsehood, destroyed the happiness of man; and as having established on this earth a kingdom of evil directly antagonistic to the kingdom of God. Our Lord Himself said to the unbelieving Jews, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father thereof' (John viii. 44). In refutation of the blasphemous suggestion, that He performed some of His miracles through being in league with Satan, He said, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?' (Matt. xii. 25, 26.) At a later period He repeatedly spoke of Satan as 'the prince of this world'; and His Apostles dwell on his unceasing efforts, and those of the hosts under his control, to counteract the purposes of Divine grace and to ruin men. St. John recognises his agency in bringing about the first transgression, as well as his constant efforts to uphold and diffuse the dominion of evil, when he affirms, 'To this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil' (1 John iii. 8).

It was the sin of *Adam* that brought ruin on our world. *He* stood, as St. Paul teaches us, as the Head and Representative of his race; and had he continued faithful, the fall would have been averted. The effects of his transgression on all his descendants will be considered more fully in the next Chapter, in which the doctrine of Original Sin will engage our attention. But we must here dwell on the immediate results of his disobedience.

The judgment threatened against transgression was expressed in the comprehensive words, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof

thou shalt surely die.' When this declaration is viewed in the light of the teaching of the New Testament, it will be seen to include several particulars.

1. First, it implied the subjection of Adam to *the death of the body*. We freely admit that death was the law under which the inferior animals were, from the first, called into being: but it is distinctly implied throughout the Scriptures, that *man* would not have died had not sin entered our world. His state of trial, we conceive, would have been terminated at some period fixed by the Divine wisdom; and, enjoying confirmation in good, he would have rejoiced eternally in the Divine smile. It is not for us to speculate whether this earth would have been his permanent abode; but this is certain, that he would not have had to submit to that change from which our nature instinctively recoils,—a change painful, humiliating, and distressing. But this subjection to the stern law of mortality followed upon Adam's transgression of his Maker's command. In the sentence pronounced upon him we read, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return' (Gen. iii. 19).

2. But the death threatened against transgression included *the loss of spiritual life;* and this penalty immediately followed it. When the soul of man is in communion with God, there is an inward life diffused through it, manifesting itself in holy affections and spiritual aspirations and efforts. This life is imparted and sustained by the Holy Spirit. He dwelt in the soul of Adam, in his state of innocence; but when Adam fell, He forsook His polluted habitation, and the loss of spiritual life was the natural and inevitable result. Every devout student of Holy Scripture will be aware of the peculiar sense in which the terms *death* and *life* are often employed by the Sacred Writers. We may cite in illustration the statement of St. Paul, 'For the mind of the flesh is *death;* but the mind of the Spirit is *life* and peace' (Rom. viii. 6). And we may add the remarkable words of our Lord Himself: 'Verily, verily, I

say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but *hath passed out of death into life*' (John v. 24).

3. But, in the nature of things, spiritual death, if it be not arrested by the communication of spiritual life, must issue in *eternal death*,—the everlasting separation of the soul from God, and the irretrievable loss of its proper blessedness. Subjected to condemnation, and destitute of the life of God, the polluted soul, whose probation is terminated, must be eternally undone. There is a fearful emphasis in the appeal of St. Paul: 'What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is *death*' (Rom. vi. 22).

Such, we conceive, was the comprehensive meaning of the *death* threatened as the penalty of disobedience. But, in connection with this, we have to mark two other consequences of the fall. In the sentence which God pronounced on the first sinning pair,—mercifully spared on earth through the provisions of redemption,—He affirmed that the ground should be cursed for Adam's sake, and that his lot should be one of toil and hardship; while to Eve and her descendants special sorrow and peril in childbirth were appointed (Gen. iii. 16—19). But the terrors of the sentence of judgment were alleviated by the hope of a Deliverer, the Seed of the woman, who should triumph over the enemy that had seduced them, and through whom life and blessing should flow to all who should trust in Him.

CHAPTER III.

THE EFFECTS OF ADAM'S SIN UPON HIS DESCENDANTS—THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN.

IT has been already stated, as the doctrine of Holy Scripture, that Adam stood as the Head and Representative of his race, so that his fall affected not himself only but his descendants. This is distinctly affirmed by the Apostle Paul, in the comparison which he draws, in the Epistle to the Romans, between Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ, and his elaborate statement of the contrast between the effects of the disobedience of the one, and the mediatorial righteousness of the Other. In that passage, which now specially claims our attention, he says of Adam that he was 'a figure of Him who was to come'; while in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, he designates our Lord 'the last Adam' and 'the Second Man,' thus marking emphatically the relation in which Adam and the Lord Jesus respectively stood to the human race.

The passage in the Epistle to the Romans to which we have alluded presents to us the doctrine of *Original Sin* in its most complete and striking form. That passage is as follows:—'Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:—for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam unto Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of Him who was to come. But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died,

much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many. And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification. For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ. So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous' (Rom. v. 12—19).

Now the obvious teaching of this passage is, that all who spring from Adam in the way of natural descent *share in the penal consequences of his transgression.* These consequences the Apostle sums up in the one word '*death*'; but he uses also other phrases which show the awful import of that word, and the extent of the moral ruin which the original apostasy has brought on our world.

1. The first of these is *condemnation.* When Adam transgressed his Maker's command, he fell under His righteous displeasure. Towards all upright and holy beings the government of God is one of security and blessing; but it is one of judgment towards those who sin. And St. Paul expressly teaches us that, as the result of Adam's sin, condemnation fell upon the race; though he places in connection with this the provision made through the Lord Jesus for our justification and eternal life.

2. The second penal consequence of the first transgression is the loss of *inward, spiritual life.* To this we have adverted in the preceding Chapter, as sustained by Adam and Eve upon their disobeying the Divine command. And in this result of the fall we all share. The Apostle uses the comprehensive words, 'By the trespass of the one the many died'; and no

exposition of that phrase can come up to the full import of his language, which does not include the loss of spiritual life, as resulting from the withdrawal of the Spirit from the heart of man. This, we conceive, is the origin of our *depravity*. In the absence of that inward life which is imparted by the Holy Ghost, our affections become disordered, and we fall under the power of unholy and sensual tendencies. Self becomes the great object of regard; and pride and resistance to restraint develop themselves in offensive forms. No longer drawn to God in pure and reverent love, we seek our own gratification, or glory, or wealth, as the end of being; and too often sensational impulses gain the mastery over our better aspirations and desires.

3. Still further, as one of the penal consequences of the first transgression, we are brought under *the stern law of mortality;* and that law is not reversed even in the case of those who have embraced the Saviour. 'And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness' (Rom. viii. 10). We have already considered this part of the original sentence, in dwelling on the effects of the fall on our first parents; and it is only necessary to add that, as the result of the reign of death, the earthly life of multitudes is one of painful 'bondage,' from the apprehension of that dreaded change.

4. But, as we have seen, spiritual death must naturally issue in eternal separation from God, unless it is removed by the communication of life from above. Among the effects of the fall, therefore, viewed simply in themselves, we must place liability to *eternal death;* but the provisions of redemption come in to meet our case, showing us that no man will finally perish merely through the sin of Adam, and that all will be dealt with on a system of moral government which combines *grace* with *righteousness*.

In tracing the penal consequences of the first transgression we have adverted to *depravity* as necessarily resulting from the withdrawal of the Spirit. This feature of our natural condition

is again and again placed before us in Scripture, while the facts of history illustrate the universal diffusion of moral evil, and the strength of our unholy tendencies. The conflict which St. Paul traces in Rom. vii. between the impulses of sinful passion and the better aspirations of an enlightened mind confirms the fact of our depravity; while his emphatic declaration, 'For I know that in me, that is, *in my flesh*, dwelleth no good thing,' shows that that depravity is total, as well as universally diffused. The remarkable phrase just cited, 'the flesh,' is clearly used in many passages of Holy Scripture, to indicate human nature considered as unregenerate and depraved. The precise idea which it suggests appears to be that of human nature viewed as destitute of the spiritual life which only the Holy Ghost can impart, and thus as being under the power of unhallowed tendencies and impulses. The words of our Lord, when urging the absolute necessity of a new birth, are full of instruction on this point:—'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit' (John iii. 5, 6). Nor should we overlook the striking manner in which St. Paul again and again uses the phrase, 'to be in the flesh,' not in reference to our earthly life, but as indicating our state when destitute of the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit. Thus he writes to the Romans, 'For when we were in the flesh, the sinfu passions, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death' (Rom. vii. 5). 'They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you' (Rom. viii. 8, 9).

We must not close this subject without again adverting to the light shed on it by the arrangements of the mediatorial economy. Adam was spared and permitted to become the head of a race, because Divine wisdom and love had provided a Redeemer to appear in the fulness of time. The provisions of redemption reach to the whole race of man, though it does not

follow from this either that all men will necessarily be saved, or that they are indeed at any time actually justified through Christ. But this is clear, that through the mediatorial righteousness of the Lord Jesus, the way of justification and life is opened to all men. The case of those who die in infancy is plain: they are justified and have eternal life in Christ. The case of those adults who have never heard of the Saviour, we must leave to Him who only can apply to their varying position and character the principles of His government; but it must not be forgotten that that government is now one of grace through Christ, as well as of righteous retribution. As to all, however, who live to years of moral action, and to whom the Lord Jesus has been made known, their justification depends on their embracing Him, so as to appropriate His sacrifice and surrender themselves to His service.

Thus the doctrine of Original Sin must ever be viewed in connection with the abounding grace provided for man in Christ Jesus. Dr. Pope has properly said, 'The great antitheses of this doctrine are reconciled in the statement, carefully guarded, that original sin is the sin of Adam's descendants as under a covenant of grace. What it would otherwise have been we can never know: there would then have existed no federal union of mankind. The souls of Adam and Eve would have only added two more to the spirits of evil. As we know the doctrine and the fact, it is the harmony of truths in our being otherwise irreconcilable. Human nature is lost, and yet we are still "the offspring of God." The natural and moral image—essentially one in creation—has departed in its glory, and yet it is recognised as in some sense still existing. Every man is born condemned, and yet he is bidden not to put from him life. He is by nature able neither to think nor feel, nor act aright; yet he is throughout Scripture appealed to as if his duty were simply matter of will. In short, original sin and original grace met in the mystery of mercy at the very gate of Paradise.' *

* 'Compendium of Christian Theology,' vol. ii., pp. 60, 61.

Section III.

THE MEDIATORIAL ECONOMY.

CHAPTER I.

THE ETERNAL COUNSEL OF THE FATHER.

NO truth is more distinctly affirmed in the New Testament, than that the scheme of human redemption was formed in the Divine Mind before the foundation of the world. The fatal apostasy of the first Head of our race was foreseen; and a restorative economy was provided, under which all who should embrace the Saviour should rise to higher privileges than were enjoyed by man in Paradise. It was the eternal purpose of God that, in the fulness of time, the Son should assume our nature, should dwell on earth as the Man of sorrows, should redeem us by dying in our stead, and should then rise to a state of unutterable glory as the Mediator, and bestow on all His people a complete and everlasting salvation. Under this constitution of grace, the Incarnate Son was to become the Head of a new and sacred brotherhood of humanity, who, throughout eternity, should enjoy His complacency and reflect His glory.

It is instructive to turn to some of the passages in which these positions are affirmed. In the first Epistle of St. Peter we read, 'Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb with-

out blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ; who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through Him are believers in God, which raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God' (1 Peter. i. 18—21). St. Paul repeatedly dwells on the truth before us. In the opening of his Epistle to the Ephesians he says, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ; even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love' (Ephes. i. 3, 4). In a subsequent passage, having referred to the rich provisions of grace in Christ, and the comprehensive character of the evangelical economy, as included in 'the mystery which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things,' he goes on to speak of the unfolding of this mystery, and the consequent manifestation through the Church of 'the manifold wisdom of God,' as being 'according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Ephes. iii. 9—11). In the Epistle to the Romans, too, he adverts to the grand consummation in which the purpose of God respecting those whom He foreknew as repenting and believing in Christ should issue,—that consummation being their perfect conformity to the image of the Incarnate Son, and their eternal participation in His glory (Rom. viii. 28—30).

The truth which we are now considering invests the scheme of our redemption with a solemn and affecting grandeur. As we reflect on it, and especially on the mysterious theme of the Divine prescience which it involves, our powers of thought falter, and we feel how feeble are their loftiest efforts. But it is a truth which we must firmly hold; and it is one which, in some of its bearings, may contribute to encourage and sustain our confidence as we come to the Lord Jesus humbly to claim in Him the richest blessings of salvation.

It is in accordance with this truth that our Lord invariably

represented Himself as carrying out the purposes of the Father in His whole mediatorial work. In considering His character as one of the leading credentials of Christianity, we have adverted to His profound devotion to the Father's will, and have cited some of the impressive sayings in which He affirmed this as the governing principle of His earthly course. But the subject admits of further illustration. Towards the close of His ministry, He declared in reference to His teaching, 'He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I spake not from Myself: but the Father which sent Me, He hath given Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life eternal: the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto Me, so I speak' (John xii. 48—50. See also xvii. 6—8). In many of His discourses recorded by St. John, the Saviour dwelt on the perfect harmony of design and action between Himself and the Eternal Father. The sufferings which came upon Him at the close of His earthly career, and the bitter and ignominious death which He had to undergo, He spoke of as the Father's appointment, to carry out His counsel for man's redemption. When in Gethsemane He prayed for a mitigation of that anguish which oppressed His spirit, and for the shortening of its duration, He qualified that appeal to the Father by the words, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt;' and when, at length, the band of armed men, led by Judas, came to apprehend Him, and Peter stood forward to defend Him with the sword, He said to him, 'Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?' (John xviii. 11.)

But the fact that the Son, in all His actings as the Mediator, is carrying out the eternal counsel of the Father, should banish every latent distrust from our minds, as we come to Him for salvation, and through Him plead with the Father. There may sometimes be a secret suspicion or fear that the Father will repel us on account of our guilt and defilement, even when we

come to confess and renounce our sins, and to cast ourselves upon the provisions of grace in Christ. But our Lord Himself teaches us, that in welcoming the returning sinner who, following the light of the truth which the Father sheds on His mind, comes to Him for salvation, He is only accomplishing the Father's will. 'All that which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. . . . For this is the will of My Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day' (John vi 37, 38, 40).

CHAPTER II.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST—HIS TRUE AND PROPER DEITY.

IN considering the great doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, we dwelt on the eternal glory of the Son of God. Following the course of thought suggested by our Lord's own words, and by some of the leading declarations of His Apostles, we endeavoured to raise our minds to the contemplation of the Son in His pre-existent state, and in His unique and eternal relation to the Father.

But we are now to think of the Son as assuming our nature, taking it into union with His own eternal Personality, and thus becoming the Mediator between God and man. The Person of Christ is a theme of transcendent interest, and one interwoven with all the facts and arrangements of the Mediatorial economy.

The general truth of the real and proper Deity of our Lord is sustained by an ample array of Scriptural evidence. In the very front of that evidence we place the passages which set forth His glory as 'the Son,' 'the only begotten of the Father,' possessed of unutterable glory with the Father 'before the world was.' For that the august title 'the Son of God' refers properly to the Divine and eternal nature of our Lord is now surely beyond question. We have seen how the Saviour Himself and His Apostles apply this appellation to Him in His pre-existent state, as indicating the relation in which, in the unity of the Divine essence, He stands to the Eternal Father. And it is observable that when St. Paul, in a compendious statement of the economy of redemption, distinguishes the two

natures of the Redeemer, he uses this phrase in the sense for which we contend:—'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit' (Rom. viii. 3, 4).

But there are several lines of evidence, distinct from and additional to this, which support the truth that in the Person of our Lord we behold God incarnate.

1. The first of these is, that various *Divine Names* and *Titles* are applied to Him. He is called *God*, and that under circumstances and in combinations which clearly shut out any qualified or inferior sense of the word. We may refer to the following passages:—'For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace' (Isa. ix. 6). 'They shall call His name Immanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us' (Matt. i. 23). The exclamation of Thomas, when convinced that his Risen Lord indeed stood before him and addressed him, 'My Lord and my God,' was not a thoughtless utterance, but the expression of his faith; and it was approved as such by our Lord Himself:—'Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed' (John xx. 28, 29). St. Paul's statement in his enumeration of the privileges of God's ancient people is another striking instance in which the title *God* is given to our Lord:—'Whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever' (Rom. ix. 5). In the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the final and perfect revelation of God is declared to be in the Son; and, contrasting Him with the angels, the Apostle says, 'Of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire; but of the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever' (Heb. i. 7, 8). And St. John

writes in his first Epistle, 'We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life' (1 John v. 20).

Again, the title *Lord* is applied to the Saviour in its highest sense. In the prophecies of Jeremiah we read, 'I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness' (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6). In the inspired utterance of Zacharias, at the circumcision of his infant son, John the Baptist, he referred to that greater Prophet whose way his son was to prepare as 'the Lord' (Luke i. 76).

Other titles which imply Divinity are applied to our Lord. He is spoken of as 'the Prince of life,' and 'the Lord of glory' (Acts iii. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 8). He Himself, when He appeared to the Apostle John in Patmos, assumed the designations, 'the First and the Last,' and 'the Living One.' 'Fear not; I am the First and the Last, and the Living One: and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades' (Rev. i. 18). With regard to the former of these appellations, it is observable that the Most High claims it as His own exclusive right (Isa. xli. 4; xliv. 6); and it is evident that no creature could affirm that he was the first of beings, and that of himself he should endure throughout eternal ages. The other title, 'the Living One,' is equally expressive of true and proper Godhead. In every creature life is derived and dependent: in God only is it inherent and essential.

2. A second branch of the Scriptural evidence of the true and proper Deity of our Lord consists of the passages in which *Divine Attributes* are ascribed to Him. We may specify *eternity*, which is clearly implied in one of the appellations just adverted to, 'the First and the Last,' and in His own declaration, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, *I am*'

(John viii. 58). So, too, *omnipotence* is attributed to Him. He is 'the Mighty God'; and the declaration in Rev. i. 8 may be shown to belong to Him:—'I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.' Again, *omnipresence* is claimed by Him. 'And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven' (John iii. 13). 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. xviii. 20). Still further, *omniscience* is attributed to Him. He accepted the declaration of Peter, 'Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee' (John xxi. 17). He is spoken of as knowing the hearts of all men; and He Himself claims to pierce into the inmost recesses of every human breast (John ii. 24, 25; Rev. ii. 23). Yet again, *immutability* belongs to Him. While every creature is liable to change, it is affirmed that 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever' (Heb. xiii. 8).

3. A third branch of evidence is that derived from the fact, that *Divine Works*—works which God only can perform—are ascribed to our Lord. He is spoken of as the *Creator* of all things. Of the Eternal Word, who 'became flesh, and dwelt among us,' St. John says, 'All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made' (John i. 3). St. Paul, having spoken of the Son as 'the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,' adds, 'For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist' (Col. i. 15—17). In the conclusion of this passage the Son, now Incarnate, is spoken of as the *Sustainer* of universal nature. This character is ascribed to Him, also, in the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where He is represented as 'upholding all things by the word of His power.' Still further, while on earth, in His state of

humiliation, He claimed *the right to forgive sins;* and when that claim was called in question, He sustained it by a miracle which evinced His authority and power. To a paralytic man who was brought before Him, He said, 'Son, thy sins are forgiven'; and when some of those who heard Him reasoned in their hearts, 'Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth; who can forgive sins but one, even God?' He replied to them, 'Whether is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven, or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?' and then, to show that He, the Son of man, had 'power on earth to forgive sins,' He addressed the afflicted man, 'I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house'; and immediately 'he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all' (Mark ii. 5—12). To the Redeemer, also, belongs *the exercise of the final judgment.* The passages in which this is affirmed are very numerous; but we need only cite our Lord's own words:—'When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all the nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left' (Matt. xxv. 31—33). Now it must be obvious that this is a function which only a Divine Person can discharge. To decide with unerring accuracy and perfect righteousness the character and destiny of every human being requires Divine perfections, and especially the attribute of omniscience.

4. Another line of evidence in support of the true and proper Deity of our Lord is that *Divine worship* was offered to Him and accepted by Him; and that He is associated with the Eternal Father in the most solemn prayers of the Apostles as *the Source of spiritual blessing.* In the days of His flesh, when He had evinced His power over universal nature by calming the tempestuous sea, and rescuing Peter, who had walked on the water to meet Him, but whose faith began to fail, it is related that 'all they that were in the boat worshipped Him, saying,

Of a truth Thou art the Son of God' (Matt. xiv. 33). Thus they recognised Him as more than man. Nor did He repel their homage. He accepted it as called forth by a thoughtful recognition of His Person and character. As the Apostles saw Him rise to heaven from the Mount of Olives, it is recorded that 'they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy' (Luke xxiv. 52). The first martyr, Stephen, was favoured with a vision of His glory, and breathed his soul into His hands:—'And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit' (Acts vii. 59). When we turn to the Epistles of St. Paul, we find that his ordinary form of salutation to the Churches was, 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.' It was thus his established practice to recognise all spiritual blessings as flowing to man not only from the abounding love of the Father, but from the rich grace of the Son, and as dispensed by Him as the adorable Mediator. The association of the Lord Jesus with the Eternal Father in other prayers of this Apostle is well worthy of attention: but it must suffice to refer to 1 Thess. iii. 11—13, and 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. In one of the visions of the Apocalypse, too, the Apostle John heard the angelic hosts offer their united worship to the Lamb:—'Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing': and then the anthem of praise was taken up by every creature, 'Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever' (Rev. v. 12, 13).

5. But even these lines of argument, conclusive as they are, do not exhaust the evidence that in the Person of our Lord we behold God Incarnate. The statements of St. Paul, in the opening of his Epistle to the Galatians, cannot be reconciled with the theory of the mere humanity of Christ:—'Paul, an Apostle, not from man, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.' The claims of our Lord on the devotion of all His followers

obviously imply His possession of a nature truly and properly Divine. How often do we meet with the remarkable and emphatic words, 'for My Name's sake,' to intimate the motive which should influence us both in the activities of service and the endurance of suffering! And then we hear our Lord saying, 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that doth not take his cross, and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me' (Matt. x. 37, 38). Just as He was approaching the hour of His deepest sufferings, He claimed the homage and obedience of every human being, and declared emphatically, 'If any man serve Me, him will the Father honour' (John xii. 26). His Apostles, too, repeatedly affirm, that all who obtain spiritual life through Him are bound, from that very time, 'not to live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again.' Everywhere, indeed, it is implied that *love to Christ* is to be the supreme and governing principle of our minds. While our love to every creature, even to those who are bound to us by the closest ties, and whose character may justly call forth our esteem and admiration, is to be regulated and guarded, so that it shall not interfere with that supreme love which God claims as His own inalienable right, our love to Christ is to know no bounds but the capacity of our minds; and the solemn declaration of the Apostle recognises the Saviour's claim on all mankind:—'If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema. Maranatha' (1 Cor. xvi. 22).

To the adorable Redeemer, then, we should ever turn with profound reverence, and love, and trust, as God Incarnate; and we may well rest in the assurance, that in committing ourselves to Him, and devoting ourselves to His service, we are safe and blessed.

CHAPTER III.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST—HIS PERFECT MANHOOD—THE INDIVISIBLE UNION IN HIM OF THE DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURES.

IN the Lord Jesus Christ we behold humanity in its perfect form. The Eternal Son assumed our nature in a state of lowliness and humiliation, but free from every stain of sin; and now, having made atonement for sin, and risen from the dead, He has gone into heaven as the glorified Mediator. He lives and reigns as the God-Man; and in Him our nature appears in its perfection of dignity and blessedness.

It is instructive to dwell on some of the leading passages of the New Testament, which refer to the humanity of our Lord, while they recognise also His true and proper Deity. One of the most striking of these is the statement of St. Paul to the Galatians:—'But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons' (iv. 4, 5). Here there is a reference to the miraculous conception of our Lord's humanity. This truth is explicitly set forth in the evangelical narratives; and it is, indeed, essential to the mediatorial scheme. All who spring from Adam in the way of natural descent share, as we have seen, in the penal consequences of his apostasy. But it is inconceivable that the Eternal Son could take human nature as defiled by sin into union with His own Personality; and the Mediator, too, was to come as 'the Second Man,' the second Head and Representative of our race, to repair by His obedi-

ence unto death the ruin brought upon the world by the first Adam. Here, too, we have the comprehensive statement, that our Lord was made 'under the law,' not only submitting to the ordinances and requirements of the Jewish Church, in the midst of which He appeared, but becoming, in His earthly state, the 'righteous Servant' of the Father. In this character a perfect human righteousness was required of Him; and, when His hour arrived, He bore, as our Representative, 'the curse of the law,' that He might rescue and save us whom the law held and condemned.

Another passage, equally striking and comprehensive, is one cited in the preceding Chapter from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans:—'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh' (viii. 3). Here, again, while the Divine nature of our Lord, as the Son of God, is recognised, His true and perfect manhood is declared. The carefully guarded language of the Apostle teaches us that His humanity was free from every stain of sin, but that in all other respects He was made like unto us. He came 'in the likeness of sinful flesh.' He became a partaker of our nature in its weakness, and its exposure to conflict, temptation, and suffering; and at length He offered Himself 'for sin,' and completed the humiliation of His earthly course by dying for us the accursed death of the cross.

Thus are we reminded that the relation between the Saviour and our race is most intimate and endearing. Jesus, the Incarnate Son, is our Brother. His heart, while He was here upon earth, beat with the sympathies of humanity. He felt as we feel, excepting only that His spirit was free from all moral defilement. On this thought we may profitably linger.

The Lord Jesus was, at times, the subject of physical *weariness* and *pain*. In Him, 'the Man of sorrows,' the might of omnipotence was strangely blended with feebleness and suffering. It is not for us to say, to what extent the weight which always rested upon His spirit, during His public ministry,

habitually affected His outward frame: but we know that there was a season in His history in which His physical suffering was exquisite, and His physical exhaustion appalling. In the garden and on the cross He appears in the feebleness of His flesh, a sharer of our weakness and pain, as well as the subject of the deepest mental anguish.

Again the Saviour felt the sorrow of *wounded affection*, when His kindness was met by ingratitude, and when He was treated with contempt and hatred by those on whom He had sought to pour the light of heavenly truth. Of the crowds that attended His ministry at one time, how many 'went back and walked no more with Him'! Many of His relatives after the flesh treated His claims, for a long time, with neglect, and even said of Him, 'He is beside Himself.' One of the twelve betrayed Him with kisses into the hands of His enemies. The multitude, to whom He had ever been ready to unfold the lessons of heavenly wisdom, and whose sufferings He had sought to alleviate or remove, joined in the cry of the chief priests and Pharisees, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him.' The Saviour's heart was not insensible to all this. He was wounded by these displays of ingratitude and depravity. He was 'grieved for the hardness of heart' evinced by many who refused to consider the evidences of His claims, to submit to the restraints of His precepts, or to seek the blessings of His grace.

Still further, the Lord Jesus endured, as we do, the sorrows of *temptation*. It was a part of His humiliation that His immaculate human spirit should be assailed by the great adversary; that thoughts of evil should be again and again presented to it, though they were instantly repelled, and no sinful emotion was produced within His breast. The scene of the wilderness has a profound though mysterious interest, as showing us that the Saviour assumed our nature in all its weakness and liability to spiritual conflict. Amidst the solitudes of that district, He spent a protracted period of inward temptation; and it was not until the great Seducer, emboldened by the permission given to him to assail even the Incarnate Son of God, ventured

to make the blasphemous proposal, that He should fall down and worship him, that Jesus rose in His authority and might, and commanded him to depart. Nor was this the only occasion on which the mind of the Redeemer was tried with suggestions to evil. The prince of darkness sought again and again to pollute His human spirit; and amidst the closing scenes of His earthly suffering, put forth his utmost power to harass and afflict Him. By submitting to these assaults, the Saviour has given us the assurance of His deep sympathy with us, and His readiness to succour us in all our spiritual conflicts. 'For we have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help in time of need' (Heb. iv. 15, 16).

Thus did the Eternal Son make Himself one with us. And He is one with us still, though His state of humiliation is over, and no cloud of sorrow can, for a moment, overshadow His human spirit. In His Person, now ineffably glorified, we reverently behold the God-Man. The union of our nature with the Personality of the Son of God is indissoluble. And His glory is the pledge of the ultimate and perfect glory of His people. The great consummation to which the counsel of the Eternal Father is directed is, that the people of Christ, justified through His blood, and renewed by His Spirit, should at last be perfectly 'conformed to the image of the Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren.'

It is not necessary to enter at length into the consideration of the forms of error respecting the Person of Christ which have been advanced by some in different ages of the Church. The true doctrine is the indivisible unity of the Divine-human Person of our Lord. Thus it stands opposed to the Arian heresy, which denied the proper Deity of the Son,—to the Nestorian theory, which was inconsistent with the unity of the Redeemer's Person,—and to the Eutychian error, which involved

a confusion of the two natures. It is opposed, also, to the Apollinarian heresy, which denied to the Saviour a human spirit, distinct from the Eternal Word, and thus impaired the integrity of His manhood, contradicting many explicit statements of the Sacred Writings. The ancient Church fixed, with propriety, upon four leading terms, to guard the true doctrine of our Lord's Person,—that He is *truly* God, *perfectly* man, *indivisibly* one Person, *unconfusedly* two natures. The mystery of His sacred Person cannot be fathomed by our reverent meditation; but with gratitude, and reverence, and trust, we turn to Him as the God-Man, our Brother, and yet our Lord and God.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OFFICES OF CHRIST.

THE Lord Jesus appeared among men as the long-expected Messiah,—the Anointed of the Father. As such, He combined in His sacred Person the three great offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; and these offices now belong to Him in His state of exaltation.

He is the PROPHET of His Church. To Him we turn as the Revealer of the Father, the Supreme Teacher, in whom the gradual and fragmentary disclosures of truth given in preceding ages were completed (Heb. i. 1—3). As the scene of the transfiguration was about to close, and Moses and Elijah, the representatives respectively of the law and the prophets were about to depart, the Voice from the cloud of light proclaimed, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him' (Matt. xvii. 5).

It is instructive to mark how the Saviour spoke of Himself as revealing the Father, and declaring the truth which He had commissioned Him to announce. In the prayer which He offered up before He entered Gethsemane, He said, addressing the Father, 'I manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me; and they have kept Thy word. Now they know that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are from Thee: for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me' (John. xvii. 6—8). And as He closed that prayer, He said, referring to His

immediate disciples, 'I made known unto them Thy Name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them, and I in them' (v. 26). But it was not by His teaching only that the Lord Jesus made known the Father to His disciples. He was Himself the revelation of the Father's perfections. They who were privileged to mark the out-beamings of His moral excellences, and especially the commingling glory of His holiness and love, beheld in them the manifestation of the Father's character; and we, too, who reverently ponder the evangelical narratives, so as to trace the Redeemer's footsteps and listen to His words, 'see the Father.' In the conversation which followed the last supper, when Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us,' our Lord replied, 'Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father: how sayest thou, Show us the Father?' (John. xiv. 8, 9.)

We have already had occasion to speak of the authoritative character of our Lord's teaching, and the impression which this feature of it produced on the minds of His hearers. We need only refer, in illustration, to the Sermon on the Mount. As we listen to it, we feel that we are in the presence of One who speaks as the Supreme Lawgiver, all whose precepts are binding on the conscience, so that their observance or neglect will influence, will indeed determine, the eternal destinies of men. Other features of the Saviour's teaching will readily occur to the devout student of His words. The lofty spirituality of His discourses,—the clear insight into the workings of the human heart which they evinced,—the impressive manner in which He set forth the extent and amplitude of the Divine precepts, as reaching to the thoughts and feelings of the mind,—the solemnity of His warnings as to the result of cherished sin and obstinate resistance to the light of truth,—the tenderness and condescension of His addresses to the penitent and humble,—and the encouraging and attractive manner in which He declared the Fatherly character of God, and the minuteness of His providential care of His people,—all show Him to be

emphatically THE PROPHET, at whose feet we should sit with reverence and gratitude. We may well linger on His own precious words, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father but by Me.'

But the prophetic office of our Lord did not terminate with His ascension to His glory. *He is our Teacher still.* His own words, recorded under the inspiration of the promised Spirit, instruct, and comfort, and warn us. So, too, He speaks to us in the writings of His Apostles, composed under the guidance of the Spirit of truth (John xiv. 25, 26; xvi. 12—14). These writings, thus Divinely inspired, shed light on some of the deeper truths which our Lord Himself uttered when on earth; and His own words teach us that the full disclosure of the Christian scheme, with its rich provisions of grace and blessing, was reserved for the Holy Ghost, when He should have ascended to the throne of His glory.

The Lord Jesus is also the PRIEST of the mediatorial economy. To this office there attaches a profound interest; for, as sinful men, we need a Mediator who shall open to us, by an availing and effectual sacrifice, the way into the Father's presence, and who shall appear as our Representative when, in conscious demerit and utter feebleness, we draw near to seek the mercy and grace which we need.

The nature and functions of the priestly office are clearly set forth in the Holy Scriptures, and especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In a secondary sense all true believers are priests, as being consecrated to God, and permitted to draw near to Him to offer the spiritual sacrifices of praise and prayer, and to intercede for others. But, in the strict and proper sense, a Priest is a Divinely-appointed Representative of his fellow-men, who on their behalf offers to God a sacrifice for sin,—who, on the ground of that sacrifice, makes intercession for them,—and then, in the name of Jehovah, comes forth to bless them. All this is found in the adorable Redeemer. Constituted a Priest by the irrevocable oath of the Eternal Father,

and fully qualified for His functions by His participation of our nature and His deep experience of its sorrows and conflicts, the Lord Jesus offered up Himself to God as the Sacrifice for our sins, and now appears in the heavenly world as our Representative, and makes intercession for all who come unto the Father by Him. And He is the *only* Priest, in the strict and proper sense, under the Christian dispensation, just as His sacrifice is the only sacrifice for sin; and that sacrifice He Himself presents for us, opening to us individually the way into the holy of holies. Through Him we may draw near with confidence to the very throne of God, and bear away every blessing that we need (Heb. iv. 14—16; x. 19—25).

The frequency with which our Lord's priesthood is spoken of as being 'after the order of Melchizedek' requires a brief reference to the leading particulars in which that remarkable Priest-King was a type of Christ. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has unfolded this subject with great copiousness; and his remarks are most suggestive. As we ponder his words, we see that every thing in the history of Melchizedek was specially arranged by Divine Providence to constitute him the type of Him who was to come, and whose priestly mediation was to be the hope of the Church of God.

The very name 'Melchizedek,' 'King of righteousness,' he reminds us, was significant; while the name of the city over which he reigned, 'Peace,' or 'City of Peace,'—a city the inhabitants of which, led by their sovereign, took no part in the sanguinary conflicts of neighbouring tribes,—was also significant. Thus in the Person of the Lord Jesus the priestly office is combined with royalty; and He is preeminently the righteous and pacific Sovereign, who imparts to His people gathered around Him in His holy Salem, His City of Peace, 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Then, again, the great peculiarity of Melchizedek's priesthood was that he was not one of a race of priests, invested with that office in virtue of his descent from others who bore it, and in his turn transmitting it to his descendants, but that he stood *alone*,

the one priest of his own order. Even so the Lord Jesus is invested with a priesthood that is unique and exclusive,—such a priesthood as no one before Him could sustain, and which cannot pass over to any other. And then the remarkable incident, that Melchizedek, as the 'priest of God Most High,' blessed Abraham, the head of the chosen race, and the representative, in one sense, of the visible Church of God, foreshadowed the dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His relation, as the Source of blessing, to the universal Church; while it indicated also the superiority of the Melchizedecian priesthood to the Levitical.

But the Lord Jesus is also the KING of the mediatorial constitution. He rules in 'the kingdom of God.' Its laws are established by His authority; its blessings are dispensed by His hands. In His public ministry there were allusions to the regal office which belonged to Him, and which, after His sacrificial sufferings and death, He would formally assume. In the parable of the talents, uttered when He was approaching Jerusalem at the last passover, He referred to His own approaching departure and enthronement, together with His second coming: —'A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. . . . And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, that he commanded these servants unto whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading' (Luke xix. 12, 15). As He stood before Pilate, He replied distinctly in the affirmative to the question of the governor, 'Art Thou the King of the Jews?' and He added, 'My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence.' And when Pilate rejoined, 'Art Thou a King then?' He answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice' (John. xviii. 36, 37).

But the mediatorial sovereignty of the Redeemer was to be based upon His sacrificial sufferings and death; and until He had passed through them He could not enter into His glory, or establish among men His reign of righteousness and grace. As He was approaching the cross, He said, 'Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself' (John xii. 31, 32). After He had gone through His deepest sorrows, and had risen again from the dead, He said to two of His disciples, 'Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' (Luke xxiv. 26). And thus, when He gave His solemn commission to the eleven on the mountain in Galilee, He introduced that commission with the words, 'All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth' (Matt. xxviii. 18).

The Saviour is now enthroned in the heavenly world. In Him the prophetic oracle is accomplished, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies' (Psalm. cx. 1, 2). But the exercise of His mediatorial sovereignty, in its relations to the Church, to the world, and to the whole Universe of being, will come under consideration in a subsequent Chapter, when we contemplate the Lord Jesus in His state of exaltation.

CHAPTER V.

THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH OF CHRIST—DECLARATIONS OF OUR LORD HIMSELF.

THE *death* of the Lord Jesus is the most momentous fact in the scheme of human redemption. It was this fact which the Apostles went forth to proclaim, as that to which the faith and hope of men should be directed, and through which the reign of moral evil on this earth might be subverted and destroyed. The memorable declaration of St. Paul beautifully shows this:—'Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God' (1 Cor. i. 22—24). This fact, too, has been kept before the view of the Church, in every age, and its relation to human salvation has been impressively set forth, in the most solemn ordinance of our religion. Wherever Christianity has been embraced, the disciples of the Saviour have met together, in obedience to His own command, to partake of the sacramental emblems of His body and blood, and to avow their faith in His death, as the one all-availing sacrifice for sin. It is to the Cross that we turn, as we labour under the burden of conscious guilt, and as we look forward to the realities of eternity.

In speaking of the priestly office of the Lord Jesus, we have necessarily adverted to the sacrifice which He offered once for all, and which He still presents in the heavenly world. That sacrifice we have now reverently to contemplate.

In entering upon this profoundly interesting subject it becomes us to remember that, when the Saviour appeared on earth, there had existed, for many ages, a system of sacrifice and priestly mediation, which would prepare those who devoutly contemplated it to understand the sacrificial character of His death, when that truth was set forth in the Christian message. God had His dwelling among His people Israel; and the tabernacle, and afterwards the temple, was 'sanctified by His glory.' But all the arrangements of the Levitical economy were calculated to show that God, as *the Holy One*, cannot come into fellowship with man except through the intervention of a sacrifice, and that sacrifice one of His own appointment. Into the special dwelling-place of Jehovah, for instance,—the holy of holies,—only the high priest was permitted to enter, and he only once in the year, on the great day of atonement; and as he drew aside the veil which separated that most sacred spot from the outer sanctuary, and went, amidst the smoke of burning incense, into the immediate presence, as it were, of God, he was to take the blood of the prescribed victims, and to sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat and before it (Lev. xvi). But we need not enumerate the various sacrificial arrangements of the Levitical system. It will suffice to say, that the grand feature of that system was that stated by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews:—'According to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission' (Heb. ix. 22). The deep import of these typical arrangements was doubtless apprehended with varying degrees of clearness by different minds: but all who devoutly pondered them would be prepared, in some degree, to understand the awful mystery of the cross, when the Apostles went forth to proclaim their crucified and risen Lord as the Refuge and Life of men.

In considering the teaching of the New Testament on the subject of the Redeemer's death, we have first to ponder His own declarations. To that solemn event He looked forward through the whole period of His ministry. He referred to it

again and again, placing it under different aspects, all of which are eminently instructive.

1. He affirmed the *necessity* of His death, in order to the fulfilment of *the Father's counsel*, and in order to constitute Himself *the proper Object of trust for salvation*. Thus He said to Nicodemus, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life' (John iii. 14, 15). When Peter presumed to expostulate with Him, that surely He would never have to submit to the extremity of shame and suffering, and to die as if He had been an outcast, our Lord rebuked him, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men' (Matt. xvi. 23). Now these words of Christ clearly imply that there existed a moral necessity for His death, and that it was essential to the working out of the Father's plan for man's redemption. The remonstrance of Peter was as a stumblingblock cast in that path of service and suffering by which the Incarnate Son was to accomplish the great purpose of His mission to our world.

2. The Lord Jesus affirmed the intimate *connection* between His death and the communication of *spiritual and eternal life* to men; and, as He dwelt on this theme, He intimated that His death would sustain a *sacrificial* character, and that the *appropriation* of His sacrifice would be the grand condition of spiritual life. In His discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum, recorded in John vi., He declared, 'I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: yea, and the bread which I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world.' And when the Jews strove among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' our Lord went on to affirm, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day' (vers. 51—54). A degree

of mystery necessarily attached to these words at the time when they were uttered: but now that the revealing Spirit has shed light on the work of Christ and the arrangements of the economy of grace, we can perceive, in some degree, their deep significance, while we rejoice in that fulness of life which they hold forth to us. They teach us, emphatically, that the death of Jesus is the one all-availing sacrifice for sin, and that each of us must *appropriate* that sacrifice,—must make it his own by a faith that rests on it alone, and seeks through it spiritual life and strength.

3. There are two other declarations of our Lord which we may place in a separate class, as giving prominence to the *vicarious* character of His death, and as showing how distinctly He set forth that death as the *objective ground of the forgiveness of sins*. The former is found in Matt. xx. 28: 'Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for'—in the stead of—'many.' No words can assert more clearly than these the substitutionary character of our Lord's death, or present to us more forcibly the truth, that the redemption of mankind by His substitution and sufferings was the great purpose of His coming into our world. The other declaration referred to was uttered by our Lord in the institution of the sacrament of His Supper, just before He entered on the solitudes of Gethsemane. As He handed the bread to His disciples, He said, 'Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you;' and when He gave them the cup, He said, 'Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many *unto remission of sins*' (Matt. xxvi. 26—28, collated with Luke xxii. 19).

4. Still further, our Lord distinctly declared that His sufferings and death were *the necessary introduction to His state of glory as the Mediator*, and to the establishment of that economy under which the Spirit should be given in the fulness of His grace and power. Two passages bearing on this subject have been cited towards the close of the preceding Chapter;

and we need only refer, in addition, to our Lord's words recorded by St. Luke (xii. 49, 50). He spoke of Himself as having come 'to cast fire on the earth,'—to diffuse a purifying and saving influence among mankind by the sending down of the Holy Ghost; to the actual kindling of that fire, He affirmed, His soul went forward in holy desire: 'but,' He added, 'I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!'

Such are some of our Lord's own declarations respecting His sufferings and death; and to these a peculiar interest must ever belong. There is a depth in them which our repeated and earnest meditation can only partially disclose; and, when they are carefully pondered, they will be found to contain all that is essential to the great doctrine of the atonement.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH OF CHRIST—TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES.

WE have already seen that the full development of the Christian scheme was reserved for the Apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They were to place on record many of our Lord's own sayings, and to unfold the relation of the great facts of His history, as the Mediator, to the principles and arrangements of the Divine government. Many truths of deep interest were necessarily obscure to them during the Saviour's personal ministry; but when the great events of His death and resurrection had actually taken place, and when, according to His promise, He had sent down on them the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of truth, their views became distinct, comprehensive, and influential.

In the writings of the Apostles, as in their public teaching, the death of the Lord Jesus holds a distinguished place. Their statements respecting it are varied and impressive; and it will be instructive for us to dwell on the different aspects under which they present it to us. We can, however, only make a selection from their declarations.

1. Let us first take the Epistles of St. Paul. We may begin with that to the Galatians. In the very opening of it, he affirms of the Lord Jesus that He 'gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father' (i. 4); and in a subsequent chapter we have the striking declaration, 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse

for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith' (iii. 13, 14). Here the doctrine of our Lord's substitution is clearly taught, together with the fact that for our sake He submitted to a penal and accursed death. The same truth is implied in the remarkable passage in which St. Paul refers to his own experience of an inward life derived from Christ,—a passage which shows how the doctrine of our Lord's substitution moulded all his phraseology:—'I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me' (ii. 20).

We may next turn to St. Paul's greatest doctrinal Epistle,—that to the Romans. In unfolding the evangelical method of justification he sets forth the death of Jesus as that on which it rests, affirms its sacrificial and propitiatory character, and points out its relation to the principles and procedures of the Divine administration:—'Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood, to show His righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of His righteousness at this present season: that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus' (iii. 24—26). In a later passage, he states compendiously the bearing of our Lord's death and resurrection on human salvation, affirming that it was on account of our offences that He submitted to death, and that His resurrection afforded the proof that His atonement availed for the justification of all who should trust in Him (iv. 23—25). Soon afterwards he reasons on the greatness of the love of God, as shown in the death of Jesus for us; and his argument clearly implies the *substitution* of our Lord for sinful men, while the remarkable expression, 'justified by His *blood*,' marks the sacrificial cha-

racter of that death. 'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through Him' (v. 7—9).

In the two Epistles to the Corinthians there are striking passages respecting the death of the Lord Jesus. In the First, we have not only the great argument of the first and second chapters, which sets forth this fact as that which formed the theme of the Apostolic ministry, and the announcement of which God Himself made effectual to accomplish moral changes which no wisdom or energy of man could effect; but we have the two striking declarations, 'Our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ' (v. 7). 'For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures' (xv. 3). In the Second Epistle we have a statement which cannot be too carefully pondered in considering the doctrine of the atonement. After dwelling on the ministry of reconciliation with which himself and his fellow-labourers had been entrusted, St. Paul thus states the ground on which the offer of mercy rests:—'Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him' (v. 21). No words surely can express more clearly than these the truth, that the Lord Jesus took the place of the guilty, and endured through our sin penal suffering, that we, being united to Him, might be accounted righteous.

If we pass to the Epistles of the Captivity, we find the death of Jesus distinctly set forth as the *ground* of our forgiveness, while the eternal counsel of the Father to bless mankind in Him is impressively affirmed. We may refer especially to Ephes. i. 3—7, and Col. i. 12—14; 19, 20. In the Epistle to the Philippians we have the remarkable passage in which the Apostle, enforcing his charge that we should have the 'same mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus,' dwells on His con-

descension in assuming our nature, and in 'becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross,' and refers to this as the ground of His mediatorial exaltation (ii. 7—11).

The Epistle to the Hebrews contains distinct and even elaborate statements respecting the sacrifice and priesthood of our Lord. Without assuming the Pauline authorship of that Epistle, we may at least affirm—for this is universally admitted—that its sentiments are Pauline, and reflect the teaching of the great Apostle. Two passages only need to be cited here. Having spoken of the sacrifices offered under the law, and especially of those of the great day of atonement, the writer thus dwells on the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ:—'For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' (ix. 13, 14.) And after referring to the purification of the earthly tabernacle by the blood of the appointed victims, he adds, 'It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself now to appear before the face of God for us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; else must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself' (ix. 23—26).

2. We may now turn to the writings of St. Peter. His First Epistle contains several striking passages which set forth the sacrificial character of the Redeemer's death, and the great fact that He died as our Representative and Substitute. In the first chapter we read, 'Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold,

from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ; who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through Him are believers in God, which raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God' (vers. 18—21). In the second chapter, after commending to our imitation the meekness with which the Saviour submitted to the indignities heaped upon Him, he adds, 'Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed' (ver. 24). And in a subsequent passage he writes, 'Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God' (iii. 18).

3. In the First Epistle of St. John we have several impressive statements respecting the mediation of our Lord, and His vicarious and propitiatory death. Towards the beginning of that Epistle we read, 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world' (ii. 1, 2). In another passage he writes, 'Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren' (iii. 16). And in a later portion of the Epistle, the Apostle refers to the gift of the Son to atone for our sins, as the greatest proof of the Father's love to man. 'Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (iv. 9, 10).

To crown the testimony of St. John, we must pass to the glorious visions which he beheld in Patmos, and which he has recorded in the Apocalypse. Among these visions we dwell

with deep interest on that in which the Lamb, amidst the profound silence of heaven, took 'the book' out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, and then the anthem of adoration and praise rose from the representatives of the glorified Church and the representatives of creation generally: 'Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth' (v. 9, 10). That anthem was re-echoed by the angelic hosts, and by the whole universe of intelligent beings, not alienated from God, and banished from His presence, who united to ascribe blessing, and honour, and glory, and dominion, unto Him that sat on the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

IN the two preceding Chapters we have considered the declarations of our Lord Himself in reference to His own death, and the leading statements of the Apostles respecting that great event. We have now to gather up the results of our inquiries, and to present the doctrine of the Atonement as it is embodied in the New Testament.

1. One point, distinctly set forth in many of the passages which we have considered, is the *substitution* of our Lord for the sinful race of man. We need only recall attention to the words of Christ Himself recorded in Matt. xx. 28, to the statements of St. Paul in Rom. v. 6—8, 2 Cor. v. 21, and to the emphatic declaration of St. Peter in his first Epistle, iii. 18, to establish this position. These passages distinctly teach us that the Lord Jesus, Himself pure and spotless, took the place of the guilty. The suffering which came upon Him, and which was consummated by His death upon the cross, came upon Him as the Representative of our race, constituted such by the appointment of the Father, and His own voluntary acceptance of that position. We are justified, too, in saying that He bore for us the *penalty of sin*, so far, at least, as to render it consistent with the upholding of the law, and the accomplishment of the highest ends of a moral administration, for God to accept and justify every one who penitently believes in Him.

2. A second view under which the death of Christ is presented to us is that of *a sacrifice offered unto God* for us. This

view is clearly and impressively set forth in Heb. ix. 13, 14, 1 Cor. v. 7; and we may refer further to St. Paul's statement in Ephes. v. 2, that 'Christ gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell.' These declarations go beyond the fact, that in the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus we have the most stupendous instance of self-sacrifice: they imply that His sufferings and death had an important relation to the Divine government,—that Christ 'offered Himself to God' for our sins.

3. Intimately connected with this is the truth, that the death of Jesus was *the propitiation for our sins.* This term is used both by St. Paul and St. John, and that in connections which give to it a peculiar emphasis. We understand it to imply that the vicarious death of our Lord causes the judicial displeasure of God to pass away from those who penitently trust in it, while it forms the basis of an economy of grace to the whole world. We do not, indeed, imagine, that there is any implacability in God. So far from this, the scheme of redemption originated in the love of the Triune Deity to man, and especially reveals the Father's benignity and grace. But, on the other hand, we hold that there is *wrath* in the Divine Mind against sin, and against those who practise it in known and wilful resistance to the truth which they possess; not, indeed, a turbulent passion of anger, but the deep, calm, intense displeasure of a perfectly holy nature against that which is morally base and vile. But this displeasure and all its judicial manifestations cease towards the man who penitently relies on the Redeemer's sacrifice. Christ becomes 'our peace'; and the soul, released from its burden of guilt, rejoices in the Father's smile.

4. The death of Jesus is brought before us as so *meeting the claims of the Father's government,* and *upholding its great principles,* as to render the justification and eternal life of all who receive Him by faith consistent with the essential *righteousness* of God. This view is clearly presented to us by St. Paul in Rom. iii. 24—26. The propitiatory death of Christ, he teaches

us, was designed for a manifestation of that righteousness, both in passing over transgressions committed in former ages, and in the remission of sins under the present economy. God can now be 'just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.' We are only enlarging on the truth here affirmed when we say that, as the Moral Governor of the Universe, God cannot treat sin with indifference, or so pardon it as to suggest or allow the supposition, that to Him it is all one whether His creatures obey His precepts, or rush into disobedience and guilt. The moral government of God, as we have seen, proceeds on the principle of *retribution*. There is a moral necessity that sin should be visited with suffering. The moral order of the Universe would be subverted if sin and holiness were treated in the same manner by the Eternal One; if bold impiety, and settled malignity, and unrelenting cruelty, and reckless self-indulgence were to receive the same treatment from the hands of the great Ruler of all, as piety, and benevolence, and self-control, and diffusive kindness and compassion. The displeasure of God against sin must be manifested; the great principles of His government must be maintained. The problem, which but for revelation could have had no solution, is, how this can be done, and yet mercy come forth to invite the return of sinful men, and then to welcome and embrace them. The sacrifice of the Cross solves this difficulty. There we see One, possessed of infinite dignity and spotless purity, dying as the Representative of our race; and when a sinner, melted into penitence by the grace of the Spirit, commits himself to the Lord Jesus as having 'loved' him and 'given Himself' for him, he obtains a personal and saving interest in His death, and is 'accepted in the Beloved.' No cloud now darkens the essential righteousness of God: no relaxation of the principles of His government now affords the slightest license to sin. In the Person of the Incarnate Son, the voluntary Substitute of our guilty race, *our sin* is visited with suffering. No one can stand beneath the cross and imagine that, under the Divine government, sin can be trifled with: no one can rightly con-

template that overwhelming scene without feeling that it places him under a solemn obligation to renounce every iniquity.

5. We are thus led to contemplate another feature of the doctrine of the atonement. While the death of Jesus has this important relation to the principles and procedures of the Divine administration, it is also designed to exert a powerful *moral influence* on the human heart, turning it away from its selfishness and love of sin, subduing it to penitence, and when Christ has been embraced, and the new life of the Spirit has been imparted, constraining it to cultivate universal holiness, and especially to imitate the Saviour's self-sacrificing love. Several of the passages which have been adduced illustrate this view; and our conception of the doctrine of the atonement would be manifestly incomplete if it did not comprehend it. It was a part of the Divine counsel, that the very method of our forgiveness should be the means of impressing on us the vileness of a sinful course, and of engaging us to strive after perfect purity and goodness. And such is the influence which the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary are calculated to exert on the thoughtful mind.

This moral influence of the death of Jesus has been dwelt upon by some as forming the one essential element in the doctrine of the atonement. But while it is an important feature of that doctrine, it would be a serious error so to fix attention upon it as to pass over or cast into the shade the expiatory character of the Saviour's death. We have seen that the declarations of our Lord and His Apostles clearly imply His substitution for our sinful race, and that His death was a propitiatory sacrifice offered unto God for us. The moral theory of the atonement, as opposed to the doctrine of expiation, is open to two grave objections. It leaves out of view the *unique character* of the death of Jesus. If that death is only the most sublime instance of self-sacrifice, then, though it would stand pre-eminent, it would not stand *alone*. But it does stand alone,—a fact which we recognise as often as we gather round His table, and partake of the appointed emblems of His body and blood. The

other objection is, that it leaves out of view the important relation of the death of Jesus to the principles and procedures of the Divine government. That death, as we have seen, is the objective ground on which God remits the sins of all who make Christ their own by a self-renouncing faith; and it forms a declaration to the whole Universe of the essential righteousness of the Divine administration, and the hatred to sin by which it is characterised, even when the returning penitent is welcomed to the Divine favour, and invested with all the privileges of righteousness.

This last consideration is fatal to some other theories of the atonement, as that our Lord simply 'came into collision with the world's evil, and bore the penalty of that daring.' These theories we need not discuss at length. The Scriptural evidence of the propitiatory character of the Redeemer's death is ample and conclusive. And this only will account for the deep and overwhelming anguish which came upon Him in Gethsemane, and as He hung upon the cross. While many of His faithful servants have passed through the fires of martyrdom with holy triumph, sustained by His abounding grace, and the bright hope of an eternal union with Him, His spirit bent beneath an unutterable weight of sorrow, and His exclamation on the cross, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani,' revealed the depth of His inward anguish. Nothing can explain this but the truth that 'He bare our sins in His body on the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MEDIATOR IN HIS STATE OF EXALTATION.

THE humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ, which reached its lowest point in His submission to death, even the death of the cross, was followed, according to the Divine counsel, by His exaltation, as the Mediator, to the highest glory and the amplest dominion. 'It was not possible,' as the Apostle Peter affirmed on the day of Pentecost, 'that He should be holden of death.' All the suffering which was to come upon Him as the Representative and Substitute of our guilty race had been actually endured; the way had been opened for the justification of all who should receive Him, in perfect accordance with the principles of the Divine administration; and the scheme of human redemption required that the sufficiency and the Divine acceptance of the atonement should be proclaimed by His release from death, and that He should be enthroned as the Mediator, and sway a sceptre of unfailing righteousness and grace.

The transition from our Lord's state of humiliation to His state of exaltation was His resurrection from the dead. When He came forth from the tomb, He was no longer 'the Man of sorrows.' The burden which had rested upon His spirit, all through His earthly course, and the full weight of which pressed upon Him in Gethsemane and on Calvary, was now removed. The cup of trembling and anguish had been drunk. He was no more to undergo humiliation or to endure pain. His sacred body, too, was now in a state of incipient, but not yet perfect, glorification. He partook of food repeatedly with His Apostles, to assure them of the reality of His resurrection, and He called upon them to touch Him that they might be con-

vinced that it was He Himself, who had died on Calvary, that addressed them: but many incidents recorded by the sacred historians show that His body was not now subject to the ordinary conditions of humanity. The forty days which He spent on earth were marked by repeated manifestations of Himself to His Apostles, and by important conversations with them on 'the things concerning the kingdom of God'; but they were not like 'the days of His flesh,' which preceded the suffering of the cross. And when these days had expired, He was 'taken up' into heaven, and 'a cloud received Him out of their sight.'

In His exalted state our Lord sustains the three offices to which we have adverted as combined in His sacred Person. He is the *Prophet* of His Church, in the sense which we have already explained. He is a *Priest* upon His throne. With His own completed sacrifice He has gone for us into the heavenly sanctuary, and ever lives to present that sacrifice, and on the ground of it to make intercession for our race, and especially for those who come unto God through Him. And He dispenses blessing; His priesthood is distinguished by the power of an indissoluble and unfailing life; and in every age He is able to save His people 'to the uttermost.' The exercise of His priesthood, too, is marked by circumstances which evince His dignity and authority. The high priest of Israel could only go for a few moments, on one day of the year, into the holy of holies; and he *stood* to sprinkle the blood of the appointed victims on the mercy-seat and before it. For him to have sat down in that most sacred spot would have been an act of awful presumption; and to have sat down at the right hand of the mercy-seat, over which the shekinah appeared, would have been unutterable profanity. But the Lord Jesus *abides* in the true holy of holies. He is *enthroned* there. He has 'sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens'; and thus is the abiding and changeless efficacy of His sacrifice impressively declared.

For the Lord Jesus reigns in heaven as the *Sovereign* of the mediatorial economy. 'All authority,' He Himself declared,

when He gave His final commission to His Apostles, 'hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth.'

The sovereignty of our Lord has an important relation to *His Church.* Its laws and institutions rest on His authority. It is His prerogative to call and qualify men to serve Him in the Christian ministry. The discipline, too, which should be maintained in the Church, in order to conserve its purity and promote its efficiency, must be simply the application to individual cases of the principles which He has laid down. No power entrusted to any human minister can be used to gratify personal feeling without a violation of fidelity to Him.

The sovereignty of our Lord is exercised also over *the world.* The affairs of nations are under His control. His administration, indeed, leaves ample scope for the free will of man, and sometimes permits events to occur which to us are mysterious and perplexing; but He subordinates all things to the ultimate triumph of His cause. He 'rules in the midst of His enemies,' often baffling their designs, and making the events which seemed most adverse to the interests of His kingdom subservient to its welfare. To Him, also, we may look up as exercising a providential care over all men, and especially over those who give themselves to Him in humble faith and sincere devotion.

And the lordship of the Redeemer extends to *the whole Universe.* His own words, which we have already cited, imply this. The declarations of His Apostles on this subject are comprehensive and emphatic. St. Paul affirms that the Father hath 'made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things in subjection under His feet' (Ephes. i. 20, 22). And St. Peter teaches us that Jesus Christ is 'on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him' (1 Peter iii. 22).

In contemplating the sovereignty with which our glorified Lord is invested, it is important to remember that it is *medi-*

atorial. All its acts are subordinated to the manifestation of the Father's glory, and to the firmer establishment of the great principles of His moral government. This is intimated by the declaration that He 'sitteth on the right hand of God.' Our Lord carries out the counsel of the Father, as He dispenses blessing to His believing people, and sways His sceptre over the Universe. The glory of His sovereignty surpasses our highest conception. Not only is every earthly dignity poor and mean in comparison of that with which He is invested, and every earthly sovereignty a feeble thing in comparison of His rule over the spirits of men and His control of universal nature, but the loftiest angelic dignity and power are as nothing when compared with His majesty and resistless energy. His sway is ceaseless. No languor or fatigue can come over Him to interrupt it. His dominion, too, is marked by the calmness of conscious and unfailing might. No agitation ruffles the breast of the enthroned Mediator. The hostile assaults to which His kingdom is exposed, from age to age, however formidable they may appear, cannot ultimately succeed. All His enemies shall at length be made 'His footstool'; and amidst the glories of His final manifestation even the powers of darkness shall 'confess,' though with reluctance and shame, 'that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

For the mediatorial sovereignty of our Lord will be consummated by the exercise of *the final judgment.* He Himself declared, in the days of His flesh, 'As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man' (John v. 26, 27). Again and again are we reminded that God will judge the world in righteousness by the appointed Mediator, and that before the judgment-seat of Christ we must all be 'made manifest,'—the true character of every man being revealed, and the retributions of eternity being dispensed with perfect equity. And when that judgment is finished, then will He 'deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have abolished all rule, and all authority

and power' (1 Cor. xv. 24). The exercise of His mediatorial functions will cease; but the results of His work will remain, and He will reign for ever, His relation to His people forming throughout eternity the ground of their triumph and their joy.

For He is *the Head of His Church.* The Apostle Paul winds up the magnificent passage to which we have already referred with the words, 'And gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all' (Ephes. i. 22, 23). Some things implied in this relation have been already mentioned in connection with our Lord's sovereignty as exercised over His Church. But it includes much more than the fact that He *rules* His people. It implies, for instance, His constant *care* of His Church. This is evinced in the provision which He makes, from time to time, for its edification and enlargement; and it is beautifully indicated in the figurative expression, that He 'holdeth the stars in His right hand, and walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Not only does He inspect the state of all His Churches, and of every individual member of them; but He is at hand to impart succour and comfort to all His people, according to their circumstances and wants. So, too, as the Head of His Church, He *fills it with life.* 'The Spirit of life' is His gift to His people; and one office of the Holy Ghost is to impart to every believer a measure of that mysterious spiritual energy which brings him into vital fellowship with the enthroned Redeemer. He, also, *identifies Himself with His Church in all its interests.* His true spiritual people are His 'body.' He cannot be indifferent to their welfare. He loves to behold in them the reflection of His own spiritual excellences. He regards everything which is done to them, because they are His people, as done to Himself. He has entered heaven as 'the Forerunner' of His people, and He looks forward, with holy interest, to their eternal association with Himself, and their eternal participation of His glory. This is the grand consummation to which His work as the Mediator is directed, and in which He will Himself realise the fruit of 'the travail of His soul.'

CHAPTER IX.

THE MISSION AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

IN the inquiries in which we have already engaged, we have frequently had to refer to the work of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men. Among the credentials of our holy religion an important place has been assigned to the fact, that the claims of Christ were attested by the living energy of the Holy Ghost, effecting a decided spiritual change in the hearts of all who embraced the Saviour, and that such a change is still the result of a penitent trust in Him. We have seen, too, that the complete unfolding of the Christian scheme is to be ascribed to the Holy Ghost, as 'the Spirit of truth,' who not only recalled the words of our Lord to the remembrance of the Apostles, but 'guided' them 'into all the truth,' and disclosed to them the profound significance of the great facts of His history, and their relation to human salvation. In the writings of the New Testament, composed under the guidance and control of the Holy Ghost, we have the authoritative records of our faith. But the mission of the Spirit, as the result of the glorification of the Lord Jesus, and His work on the human mind, claim more distinct attention in our endeavour to unfold the arrangements of the mediatorial economy.

Amidst the gloom which rested on the minds of the Apostles, in the prospect of their Lord's removal from them, He sought to cheer them by the assurance that He would send to them from the Father 'another Comforter,' whose abiding presence and powerful inward working would more than compensate for the withdrawal of His visible and bodily presence. In His intercourse with them after His resurrection, He

reminded them of this promise, and charged them to wait for its accomplishment, in order to qualify them for the ministry with which He had entrusted them. Just before His ascension, He commanded them 'not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, ye heard from Me: for John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.' Soon afterwards He said, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth' (Acts i. 4, 5; 7, 8). On the day of Pentecost that promise was fulfilled; the Apostles received a power of which they were before destitute; and the living energy of the Spirit, attending the simple declaration of the claims of Jesus and the way of salvation through Him, subdued thousands to the obedience of faith.

The Christian dispensation is thus emphatically the dispensation of the Spirit. He carries out by His operations on the minds of men, through the instrumentality of the truth, the great purposes of our Lord's mediatorial work, and administers the blessings of redemption.

We have seen that it was His direct influence on the minds of the Apostles which gave them clear views of the teaching of their Lord, and unfolded to them the whole scheme of Christian truth. He, too, imparted to the 'prophets' of the new economy the special illumination under which they declared the riches of the grace of Christ. In a remarkable passage of the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul, after referring to 'the mystery' of the Divine counsel, adds, 'Which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets in the Spirit' (iii. 5). And, from age to age, He has imparted to the commissioned ministers of the Lord Jesus, and to all His servants, the varied gifts by which they have been qualified for

usefulness, and enabled both to edify their brethren and to contribute to the extension of 'the kingdom of God.'

But it becomes us, more especially, to trace His operations on the minds of all men to whom the gospel is made known, to lead them to the Saviour, and then on the minds of those who embrace the Lord Jesus, to comfort, renew, sustain, and sanctify them.

The Holy Spirit has been sent down 'to convict the world of sin' (John. xvi. 8). It belongs to Him to bring home the truth to the conscience and the heart,—to recall vividly to the minds of men their past offences,—to disclose to them their guilt and depravity,—and to awaken an intense solicitude for personal salvation. He especially convinces men of the guilt and baseness of neglecting or trifling with the Lord Jesus,—that being the crowning sin in which every evil of the heart finds its worst expression, and which involves the deepest ingratitude to God:—'Of sin, because they believe not on Me.' In the view of the antagonistic influences which are arrayed against the truth, the only hope of the Christian teacher, as he unfolds the message of Christ, is that the Holy Ghost will Himself apply it. And that hope may be confidently cherished, if only the grace of the Spirit is sought in earnest and persevering prayer.

But the Holy Spirit has been sent down, also, to convince of 'righteousness,'—to bring home to the mind of the awakened and contrite sinner the evangelical method of justification, the righteousness which God now imputes to men, through Him who has borne our curse and has gone into heaven, when in humble faith we claim Him as our own. He inspires the feeling of personal trust in the Lord Jesus, enabling the troubled and anxious spirit to appropriate His sacrifice, and to rest on His own precious words, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'

Thus it is that He imparts to us His own heavenly comfort. Upon our embracing the Saviour, under His gracious leading, so as to be constituted 'the sons of God,' He becomes to us

'the Spirit of adoption,' inspiring childlike confidence, and prompting us to draw near to God with holy freedom, to hold filial communion with Him. 'Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father' (Gal. iv. 6).

But when the Spirit thus takes possession of our hearts, He does so as the Sanctifier as well as the Comforter. He diffuses a new *life* through our souls, giving a new character to our affections and tendencies, rescuing us from the dominion of unholy passions, and imparting to us the power of spiritual obedience to the Divine will. Upon our receiving Christ by a self-renouncing faith, we are 'born of the Spirit'; and the graces of the regenerate nature now appear in our walk and conversation. We are 'after the Spirit,' and 'mind the things of the Spirit.' The Holy Ghost fashions our hearts after the character of Christ, and maintains our gracious principles by His constant indwelling. And thus are we enabled practically to develop Christian holiness. We 'walk by the Spirit,' and do not 'fulfil the lust of the flesh.'

Still further, the Spirit, working in the depths of our heart, carries on our *progressive sanctification.* He 'establishes us in Christ.' He confirms us in that intimate relation to the Saviour into which faith has introduced us, and gives to our Christian principles increasing firmness and stability. He applies the truth of Christ to our minds, so as to nourish, sustain, and mature our spiritual affections, and so as to qualify us for every holy service. The words of St. Peter beautifully express this:—'And the God of all grace, who called you unto His eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall Himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you' (1 Peter. v. 10). We may properly recall, also, the concluding words of our Lord's great promise of the Spirit:—'And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: . . . of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.' The judgment referred to is clearly one carried into effect against Satan, when man is rescued

from his power, and enabled to triumph over all his subtlety and malice. For the Spirit discloses to us the great purpose of the Redeemer, to impart to His people a complete deliverance from the moral ruin of the fall, and thus to 'destroy the works of the devil.'

Under the varying circumstances and the manifold trials of this probationary life, the Holy Spirit is true to His office as the Comforter. He is not afar off from us, when we specially need His help. Amidst the sorrows of affliction, adversity, and bereavement, He recalls vividly to the mind those precious declarations of the Divine word which assure us of the fatherly love of God, and of the sympathy of Him who on earth suffered as we do, and who, in His exalted state, is still 'touched with the feeling of our infirmities.' He breathes into the soul that 'peace' which Christ left as His legacy to His people. And in the hour of spiritual conflict He succours and upholds us, enabling us to stand unmoved in the maintenance of holy principles, and to repel all the assaults of the powers of darkness.

To crown the whole, the Spirit, while He *seals* us as the people of God, becomes to us the *earnest* of the inheritance which is assured to us by our relation to the Lord Jesus. These views are repeatedly dwelt upon by St. Paul; and we may specially refer to 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; v. 5; Ephes. i. 13, 14. This sealing of the Spirit belongs to all believers. It is spoken of in the last of the passages referred to as immediately consequent upon our reception of the Saviour. The Spirit *marks us out* as the people of God, when He assures us of our adoption and stamps on us the Divine image; and His indwelling forms our *security* against the assaults of Satan and the allurements of the world, while we humbly look to the Saviour. And then the Holy Ghost imparts to us a foretaste of the sacred peace and joy which belong to the heavenly state. His gracious action on our minds, bringing us into living sympathy with Christ,—making us, indeed, partakers of our Lord's own resurrection-life,—forms the pledge and earnest of that 'eternal life' which is God's great gift to man in Christ Jesus.

SECTION IV.

THE CHRISTIAN SALVATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONDITION AND MEANS OF PERSONAL SALVATION.

IT is now generally admitted that the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, in particular, the atonement effected by His sacrificial death, had respect to *all mankind;* so that the invitations of mercy are to be earnestly addressed to every human being. If it were necessary to establish this truth by Scriptural evidence, passages almost without number might be adduced in support of it. It will suffice to mention one or two of the explicit testimonies of the New Testament.

The argument of St. Paul, in Rom. v., on the effects of Adam's transgression on his descendants, and the benefits of the restoring work of Christ, clearly implies that the provisions of grace are co-extensive with the results of the first offence. In another Epistle he distinctly affirms that 'One died for all'; while in Heb. ii. 9, we read, that 'by the grace of God' Jesus Christ 'tasted death for every man.' The teaching of St. John is equally explicit:—'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world' (1 John ii. 1, 2). Above all, we have the distinct affirmation of our Lord Himself:—'God so loved the

world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life' (John. iii. 16).

It is not for us curiously to inquire into the precise manner in which the atonement offered for mankind bears on the position of those to whom it has never been made known. The declarations of the Christian revelation respecting the conditions of personal salvation apply to those who are favoured with its announcements, and are not intended to supply answers to speculative inquiries as to those who never heard them. We know, indeed, that these are placed, through Christ, under an economy of grace; and that the great principles of God's universal moral government will be applied to their case as modified by such an economy. But it belongs only to the Omniscient One to trace out, in minute detail, these considerations as they bear on individual men. With regard to all who die in infancy, there can be no doubt that the provisions of grace in Christ extend to their everlasting salvation. The 'free gift' has come upon them 'unto justification of life'; and He who so graciously welcomed the little children brought to Him in the days of His flesh receives them to His presence, as belonging to that 'kingdom of God' which He came to establish, and now reigns to administer.

The inquiry which concerns us is, What are the conditions, and what the means, of personal salvation, in the case of those to whom the gospel is made known? How are *we* to become partakers of all the saving benefits of our Lord's redeeming work?

To this question the New Testament supplies a distinct and unequivocal answer. The burden of our Lord's ministry in the synagogues of Galilee is thus stated by one of the evangelists:—'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the Gospel' (Mark. i. 15). Again and again He spoke of *faith in Himself* as bringing men into the possession of everlasting life (John. iii. 14—18; vi. 40, 47; xi. 25, 26). After His resurrection from the dead, He

charged His Apostles to preach 'in His name repentance and remission of sins unto all the nations' (Luke. xxiv. 47). And when the Apostle Paul reminded the elders of the Church at Ephesus of his ministry in that city, he said, 'I shrank not from declaring unto you any thing that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' (Acts. xx. 20, 21).

We may say, then, with confidence, that *repentance* and *faith* are the conditions of personal salvation; while it is *faith*—a faith that presupposes repentance—which is emphatically *the means* of connecting us with Christ, so that we are admitted to the Divine favour, and receive the Holy Spirit to inspire filial confidence and to renew our souls.

Repentance implies, first of all, *a conviction of personal sinfulness.* We have seen that it is one office of the Holy Ghost, now sent down by our glorified Lord, 'to convict the world of sin,' bringing home the law of God to the conscience in its spirituality and amplitude, and discovering to us the baseness of a course of transgression, and especially of neglecting the Lord Jesus. When this conviction is cherished, instead of being resisted, there will follow *sorrow for sin* and *hatred to it* as such. It is not simply that alarm is awakened on account of the future consequences of transgression,—proper as that feeling is,—but sin itself is mourned over as base and ungrateful. These feelings and convictions lead us *to strive against sin* in its inward movements, and to *turn away* from every form of outward transgression, watching, more especially, against those forms of evil to which we have been accustomed. These convictions, too, will lead us, if we are conscious of having injured any of our fellow-men in their persons, their property, or their reputation, to make *restitution* at the earliest possible moment. And repentance includes *the confession of sin to God*, as committed against Him, and *a turning of heart to Him* to seek forgiveness, and to receive power to avoid and resist it for the future.

The *faith* which is, emphatically, the condition and means of salvation, is a *personal reliance* on the Lord Jesus Christ, an *appropriation of His sacrifice*, to the exclusion of every other object of confidence and hope. Faith, indeed, in all its exercises includes the element of *trust*. Resting on the declarations and promises of God, as its firm and secure basis, it realises the unseen things which He has made known, and looks with confidence for the blessings which He holds forth to us. And as the Lord Jesus has been 'set forth' by God, 'to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood,' our faith turns to HIM, the atoning Saviour, to rest on His redeeming work, and humbly to claim an interest in His sacrifice, according to the counsel and purpose of the Eternal Father. Faith is represented by our Lord Himself as a *coming* to Him. 'I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst' (John vi. 35). 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matt. xi. 28). St. John speaks of it as a *receiving* of Christ (i. 12); and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews beautifully represents it as 'a flying for refuge to lay hold' on Him, as 'the Hope set before us' (vi. 18).

It is instructive and encouraging to dwell on the firm and ample *warrant* which we have for this coming to Christ. We have *His own promises* to rest upon. Two of these have just been cited; and it is only necessary to add that precious declaration which has given confidence and strength to many a trembling seeker of salvation:—'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out' (John vi. 37).

But this is not all. Our faith has to rest on *the declared will and counsel of the Eternal Father*, which assure us that we cannot come to Christ in self-renunciation and be rejected. So far from the Father being reluctant to bestow salvation on us when we embrace the Lord Jesus, it is, as we have seen, His eternal purpose to accept us in Him, and to impart to us all the riches of His grace; and the Lord Jesus, in welcoming us as we come to Him, is only carrying out that purpose.

Thus He Himself added to the words we have just cited, 'For I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. . . For this is the will of My Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.' How powerful also is the appeal of the Apostle Paul, founded on the greatness of that love of God which gave the Son for our redemption:—'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?' (Rom. viii. 32.)

We have already alluded to the fact, that repentance and faith, while they may be properly spoken of as the condition of personal salvation, do not stand in the same relation to our acceptance with God and the blessings that accompany it. Repentance is necessary to prepare us to come to Christ. Indeed, were God to pardon an impenitent man,—to receive to His friendship one who refuses to give up sin, or who is careless about obeying His precepts,—He would, in fact, surrender the principles of His government, and enter into a compromise with evil. But repentance, however genuine and deep, cannot merit pardon. It only prepares us to fly to the appointed Refuge. Nor, indeed, does faith, in any degree, merit pardon and the other blessings of Divine grace. It has not been constituted the means of our salvation because it is, in itself, a right and proper principle, and one which naturally tends to produce all good works. It is not, any more than repentance, the *ground* of our salvation. Our acceptance with God and our enjoyment of His love are based on 'the redemption that is in Christ Jesus'; they are vouchsafed to us as a matter of unmerited grace and favour; and it is faith which forms the immediate condition, and the direct means, of our salvation, as uniting us to Him who is 'made unto us wisdom from God and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'

CHAPTER II.

THE CHRISTIAN SALVATION VIEWED AS DEPENDENT ON, AND INVOLVED IN, UNION WITH CHRIST.

IT is the uniform teaching of the New Testament, that the blessings of the Christian salvation come to us *in Christ Jesus*. Not only are they vouchsafed through Him, and as the result of His redeeming work, but they become ours when we are *united to Him*, and in virtue of the *relation* which is thus established.

The great truth of the union of believers with Christ was affirmed by Himself in His last discourse with His Apostles before He suffered. He spoke of Himself as 'the vine' and His people as 'the branches'; and He urged the necessity of our 'abiding in Him' as essential to our continued spiritual life and fruitfulness (John xv). In His high-priestly prayer this truth appears in its sublimest form. He refers to His people as inexpressibly dear to Him, and He prays for their union with each other, as derived from their union with Himself and the Eternal Father. 'Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me' (John xvii. 20, 21). In the writings of the Apostles the doctrine of the believer's union with Christ is ever kept in view, and may be said, indeed, to have moulded their phraseology respecting Christian experience. Believers are 'in Christ,' and have 'the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them.' They are 'accepted

in the Beloved,' and Christ is 'in them, the hope of glory.' St. Paul, more particularly, in his great argument in the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, affirms that believers share in the death and resurrection of their Lord,—that, according to the provisions of the mediatorial constitution, the death of Christ becomes ours when we embrace Him by faith, and that, thus dying with Him to sin, we become partakers also of His resurrection-life, and are thus enabled to serve God with the energy of new affections and tendencies.

These general views will prepare us to enter upon the more formal consideration of what is implied in *union with Christ*, and to appreciate the sentiment, that the Christian salvation, in all its branches, is dependent upon that union, and is indeed involved in it.

1. First of all, it implies that we are brought into such a *relation* to Christ as to have a personal and saving interest in all that He is, and all that He has done and suffered as the Mediator. *Christ becomes ours, and we become His.* This is the ground of all our privileges and joys on earth, and of our title to eternal life.

In illustration of this view, we may refer to the remarkable expression of St. John, 'And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that *hath the Son*, hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life' (1 John v. 11, 12). St. Paul, too, when addressing the Philippians, and adverting to his own cherished sentiments and hopes, says, 'Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may *gain* Christ, and be *found in Him*' (iii. 8). This *relation* to Christ, with its privileges and obligations, is also illustrated by one of the figures chosen to represent our union with Him,—that of holy marriage. For one of the essential and characteristic features of that relation is, that each of the two parties sustaining it has a special property in the other. According to the beautiful form of words used

in the solemnisation of marriage, each party takes the other 'to have and to hold,' until death shall sever the relation, and terminate that right of property which it involves. Now the relation which subsists between Christ and His spiritual people is analagous to this, excepting only that, if we are faithful unto death, that relation will be perpetuated in the heavenly world, where our union with our Lord will become more intimate, and its pleasures be more abundant. Christ gives Himself to His people. Receiving Him we have an interest in all that He is and has. The benefit of His work and sufferings accrues to us. And we give ourselves to Him. We renounce even the wish to dispose of ourselves, as if we were independent, and had not come under the bond of a solemn and inviolable engagement. Our affections, our intellectual energies, our physical powers, our outward advantages and resources, are all placed at His disposal, and given up to Him to be employed according to His will.

Now it is in virtue of this *relation* to Christ that we are *justified* or *accounted righteous*. Several of St. Paul's statements distinctly recognise this; and we may mention, in particular, 2 Cor. v. 21, 'Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God *in Him*.' The ground of our acceptance is Christ alone, —*Christ received and appropriated*. He is 'of God made unto us righteousness.'

So, too, it is in virtue of this relation to Christ that we are constituted *the sons of God*, in the full evangelical sense of that expression. In unfolding the privileges of believers, in the commencement of his Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul says, 'Having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us *in the Beloved*' (i. 5, 6). Our forfeited relation of sonship is thus given back to us in Christ, and assumes, indeed, a higher dignity and confers a higher blessedness than it could do in Adam's state of innocence, since our

exalted Lord, the Incarnate Son, owns us as His brethren, and associates us with Himself. The message which He sent by Mary of Magdala to His Apostles, after His resurrection, is full of meaning:—Go unto My brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God' (John xx. 17). And while our adoption into the family of God is thus grounded on our relation to Christ, it is in virtue of that relation that the Holy Spirit is given to us as 'the Spirit of life,' to renew our affections, and to impart to us the power of spiritual obedience. Thus St. Paul writes, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to *them that are in Christ Jesus*. For the law of the Spirit of life *in Christ Jesus* made me free from the law of sin and of death' (Rom. viii. 1, 2). But this leads us to the second leading particular involved in the believer's union with Christ.

2. This union implies that *Christ dwells in us by His Spirit*, that we *continually derive from Him spiritual life*, and that there is thus established between Him and us *a living sympathy*.

The gift of the Spirit, to dwell in our hearts as the Comforter and the Sanctifier, is Christ's great gift to His people. We have endeavoured to show this, in treating of the mission and work of the Holy Ghost, as consequent on our Lord's glorification. The passages in which it is affirmed are very numerous and striking; and it must ever be held as a most certain and precious truth.

But this agency of the Holy Spirit in comforting and sanctifying the human mind is perfectly consistent with the sentiment, that *Christ dwells in us*, and that our spiritual life *flows from Him as our glorious and exalted Head*. Not to speak of the intimate and essential union of the Persons of the adorable Trinity, we should ever bear in mind that all the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit on our minds are to be ascribed to the work of Christ, and that the Spirit has been sent down by Him from the throne of His glory, to be His Agent and Representative. But if we would enter, even partially, into the deep truth which underlies many of the statements of the New

Testament on this subject, we must go further and affirm that there is *a common life* pervading our Lord's humanity and communicated by Him to us. We 'dwell in Him and He in us.' Our life, as believers, from first to last, is *life in Christ*. The Saviour gives His Spirit to His people in order to bring them into living sympathy with Himself, and to assimilate them, by the communication of a Divine life, to His own character. 'For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our Life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory' (Col. iii. 3, 4). And as this all-pervading energy of the Spirit of Christ thus makes us one with our Lord in feeling and character, it brings us into 'fellowship with the Father.' There is established between us and the Eternal Father not only the intercourse of friendship, but a deep and holy sympathy. Thus we attain the blessedness suited to our nature, and the great design of our Lord, as expressed in His valedictory prayer, is accomplished:—'And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst Me' (John xvii. 22, 23).

3. And thus are we prepared to regard union with Christ as implying, thirdly, that *the Lord Jesus*, while He claims our unreserved submission and devoted love, *associates us with Himself in all His arrangements*, and, in particular, *designs to raise us to a participation of His own glory*.

To this thought we have had occasion to refer, when speaking of the glorified Mediator as the Head of His Church; but we may properly linger on it. Repeatedly are we reminded by our Lord's own words, that He regards whatsoever is done to His people as done to Himself. When He arrested Saul, the fiery persecutor, on his way to Damascus, He addressed him, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?' (Acts ix. 4.) So, too, in His impressive description of the final judgment, He represented every kindness shown to the humblest and most afflicted

of His people as shown to Himself, while He affirmed that the neglect of them implied a cold indifference to Him (Matt. xxv. 40, 45).

Thus throughout the earthly history of His people Christ identifies Himself with them, while He calls upon them ever to feel that they are not their own but His. In all their sorrows He looks upon them with benignant interest; in all their conflicts He is at hand to succour and defend them. And then there is before them a glorious consummation, assured to them by the Saviour's fidelity, and love, and power. Amidst the vicissitudes of the present life, He is leading them onward to a participation of His own rest and joy. So intimate is the relation which subsists between Him and them, that His own eternal triumph would be incomplete were not His people raised, at last, to share His victory and reflect His glory. Thus St. Paul adds to his declaration of our Lord's exaltation to be Head over all things to the Church the remarkable words, 'Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all' (Ephes. i. 23).

CHAPTER III.

JUSTIFICATION.

AMONG the blessings of the Christian salvation, prominence must ever be given to *justification*. On this the Apostle Paul dwells in his Epistles to the Galatians and the Romans, setting forth its nature, the ground on which it rests, the method of its attainment, and the privileges to which it introduces us.

Justification stands opposed to condemnation. It implies the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of righteousness. If we may attempt formally to define it, we may say that it is that act of God by which, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, He remits the penalty of sin and accounts us righteous, placing us in the relative position of just or righteous persons.

It is not necessary to adduce at length the Scriptural evidence that the terms 'forgiveness' and 'justification' refer to one and the same act of the Divine Mind. It will suffice to refer to Rom. iv. 5—8,—a passage in which the phrases, 'to justify the ungodly,' 'to reckon faith for righteousness,' 'to reckon righteousness without works,' 'to forgive the iniquities' of a person, and 'to cover his sins,' are all used in reference to the same act of God and the same blessing vouchsafed to men.

But it will be apparent that the term *justification* is more forcible than *pardon* or *forgiveness*,—that it places the blessing in question under a different aspect, and exhibits more vividly the position of the restored sinner under the Divine government.

It reminds us, for instance, that in receiving the returning

sinner to favour God acts as the righteous Administrator of law. The act of pardon does not set aside the claims of His law, or invalidate any principle of His government. For it is *in Christ*—for His sake alone, and in virtue of that union with Him which faith establishes—that God accounts us righteous. The Most High retains His character as the Administrator of law, even while He welcomes us, unworthy in ourselves, to His favour and complacency.

Again, the term *justification* forcibly expresses the greatness of that state of privilege to which the pardoned sinner is introduced. He stands before God relatively righteous. He is loved and treated as if he had been just; and those great spiritual blessings from which he had been excluded by guilt are now vouchsafed to him. He has 'peace with God,' and can approach Him even with childlike confidence.

We have already pointed out that the *ground* of our justification is the redeeming work of Christ, and, in particular, His sacrificial death, in which, upon our embracing Him by faith, we have a personal and saving interest. We need only refer, in illustration and proof of this, to Rom. iii. 24—26. It would be an error to speak of faith as the ground of our justification, as if it were reckoned to us for righteousness on account of its own right character and its tendency to produce all good works. The office of faith, as we have seen, is simply to connect us with Christ, so that He becomes ours and we become His. It has been properly said by Dr. Bunting, 'When God imputes faith for righteousness, He has respect, not to the worthiness or excellency of faith, but to the worthiness and excellency of that Divine Redeemer on whom our faith terminates, and who is "the Lord our righteousness."'

In speaking of Christ as the ground of our justification, while we give prominence to His sacrificial death, we must not overlook the unfailing obedience of His earthly life. It was essential that, as the Mediator, He should establish a perfect human righteousness, that He might 'offer Himself without spot to God.' The work of the adorable Redeemer must be

regarded as *one whole*. On the one hand St. Paul says, 'As through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the *obedience* of the One shall the many be made righteous' (Rom. v. 19); but in the very same chapter he speaks of our being 'reconciled to God through the *death* of His Son,' and 'justified by His *blood*' (vers. 9, 10). Nor is there any inconsistency in these statements. The obedience of our Lord, as the Mediator, comprehended His perfect fulfilment of the law; but it comprehended, also, as its highest feature, and that which gave to it its availing character, that He shrank not from bearing the penalty of the law under which, as the Representative of man, He placed Himself, but by dying as our Substitute fulfilled the counsel of the Divine wisdom, and holiness, and love. He became 'obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.'

The *means*, or *instrumental cause*, of our justification is *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*. This has been dwelt upon in the Chapter in which we have treated of the condition and means of personal salvation. We have seen that faith always includes the element of *trust*, and that justifying faith is specially a personal reliance on the death of Christ,—a personal appropriation of His sacrifice. But it is instructive to observe that, while this was ever kept in view by the sacred writers, they sometimes vary the mode of presenting the subject of faith, connecting it with the acceptance of the Father's counsel for our salvation, and His declaration of the sufficiency of our Lord's atonement in the very fact of raising Him from the dead. There are two remarkable instances of this in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. In iv. 23—25 we read, after a reference to the faith of Abraham, 'Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on Him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.' In x. 9, 10, he thus explains 'the word of faith' which forms the burden of the Christian message:—'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth

Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' And how encouraging and consolatory is the view of our Lord's resurrection here suggested! God hath 'raised Him from the dead;' and as we look upon Him no longer oppressed with sorrow, we see the proof that all the penal suffering which was to come upon Him as our Representative and Substitute has been actually endured, and that all who receive Him shall be accounted righteous, and gain a title to eternal life.

One feature of the evangelical method of justification on which St. Paul lays great stress is, that it is perfectly *gratuitous*, and forms a development of the abounding *graciousness* of God. 'Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (Rom. iii. 24). 'For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace' (iv. 16). In summing up his teaching on the subject, he says, 'We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith, apart from the works of the law' (iii. 28). This last clause does not refer exclusively, or even specially, to the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic law. It excludes *all* works of law from the office of justification. We are not to rely on our endeavours to obey the moral precepts of God as being, in part, the ground of our justification. Christ alone is that ground. But while our acceptance is thus gratuitous, and 'good works' have no part in our justification, the salvation which God bestows includes the communication of new affections and tendencies which manifest themselves in obedience to His will. Beautifully has St. Paul combined these thoughts in writing to the Ephesians. First of all, he says, 'By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory'; and then immediately he adds, 'For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them' (Ephes. ii. 8—10).

In illustrating the *excellence* of this method of justification,

the Apostle Paul gives prominence to three considerations. He affirms that it is adapted to all mankind, and shows forth the benignity of God to all. 'Is God the God of Jews only? is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also: if so be that God is one, and He shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith' (Rom. iii. 29, 30). He affirms, again, that it is calculated to shut out pride from man. 'Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay: but by a law of faith' (v. 27). The tendency to glory in ourselves is one of the most insinuating, and at the same time one of the most pernicious, of which our depraved nature is the subject. It is one form of self-idolatry. Now the very constitution of the scheme of mercy is designed to strike at the root of this baneful tendency. If our salvation were 'of works,'—if by our own power we rescued ourselves from the thraldom of unholy passions, and merited the forgiveness of our sins,—we should have whereof to glory: but the facts, that our salvation is altogether of grace, that we receive it by reliance on the righteousness and sacrifice of Another, and that even this reliance is called forth within us by a Divine power, show us that we must ever lie low at the Divine footstool, and utterly renounce all glorying in ourselves. And then the crowning consideration on which St. Paul dwells is, that the method of gratuitous justification through faith establishes the law. 'Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law' (v. 31). Were we to attempt to claim a righteousness of our own before God, on the ground of our obedience to His precepts, we must, to have even a plausible basis of hope, lower the lofty demands of that law. But now the law is upheld in all its amplitude and extent; and while our justification is perfectly gratuitous, it is connected with the gift of the Holy Ghost to impart to us a new inward life. The contrite spirit, released from the sentence of condemnation and invested with all the privileges of righteousness, surrenders itself, under the power of this new life, to the service of Him whose abounding grace has rescued and saved it.

CHAPTER IV.

CHRISTIAN SONSHIP—ADOPTION—THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT —REGENERATION.

ONE of the most frequent and impressive representations of the position and state of believers under the Christian economy is that of *sonship to God.* In illustration of this statement it will suffice to refer to John i. 11—13; Gal. iii. 24—26; iv. 3—5,—passages which deserve the most careful and earnest attention.

In entering upon the consideration of this subject, it is important to bear in mind that man, considered as to his nature, is the offspring of God,—possessed of a spirit formed to reflect His intellectual and moral glories, and to find its repose and blessedness in communion with Him. St. Paul distinctly recognises this truth in his address to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 28, 29); and our Lord teaches us that all men, as they turn to God in prayer, may adopt the language, 'Our Father, which art in heaven.'

Still it must be maintained that, while men continue in a state of impenitence and rebellion against the Divine authority, they are shut out from the privileges of the Divine family. Their position and state are forcibly represented by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians, in contrast with the privileges vouchsafed to those who receive the Saviour: 'And you, being in time past *alienated* and *enemies in your mind* by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprovable in His sight' (i. 21, 22). While men are 'after

the flesh' and 'mind the things of the flesh,' they 'cannot please God' or enjoy the privileges of His children: they only who 'are led by the Spirit of God' are, in the highest sense, 'the sons of God.'

Now the mediatorial economy makes provision for our admission to this high and blessed relation. When by faith we are united to Christ, and are accounted righteous in Him, we receive *the adoption of sons*. And this relation, as we have seen in considering the doctrine of union with Christ, is now one of far higher dignity than that which Adam sustained in His state of innocence. For now our sonship to God is ennobled by the fact, that the Incarnate Son owns us as His brethren, and associates us with Himself.

As the immediate result of our adoption into the Divine family, we receive the Holy Spirit as '*the Spirit of Adoption*,' who, while assuring us, with greater or less distinctness, of our sonship, imparts at the same time filial dispositions, and thus regenerates our nature. This is clearly set forth by St. Paul in two striking passages of his writings. In addressing the Galatians, after affirming that, in the fulness of time 'God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,' he adds, 'And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father' (iv. 4—6). To the Romans he writes, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God' (viii. 14—16).

These passages obviously teach the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit to our adoption, as believers, into the family of God. It is under the agency of the Holy Spirit that we are led onward to embrace Christ as our personal Saviour; He 'takes of the things of Christ,' and shows them unto us; and as we rest on the Lord Jesus, and humbly claim an interest

in Him, on the ground of the Father's appointment, invitation, and promise, He breathes the feeling of peace into the soul, and prompts the cry of childlike confidence and love. To use the beautiful language of Mr. Wesley, when explaining his view of this doctrine, the Holy Spirit 'so works upon the soul by His immediate influence, and by a strong though inexplicable operation, that the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm; the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that God is reconciled, that all his iniquities are forgiven, and his sins covered.' This testimony of the Spirit, however, is blended, throughout the Christian life, with the evidence which arises from our own consciousness of new affections and tendencies. His indwelling is the source not of comfort only, but of purity and moral power; and we are satisfied, by the Christian graces which He communicates, and the spiritual strength which He imparts and sustains, that we are under no delusion, but that our peace does indeed come from the Holy Ghost, the Comforter and the Sanctifier.

It is implied in these remarks, that *regeneration* accompanies our adoption, that while we are placed in the relation of sons, we receive the spiritual life which assimilates us to the character of Christ, and imparts the power of spiritual obedience. Regeneration is, indeed, essential to Christian sonship, and is indispensable to our enjoying the privileges of 'the kingdom of God.' Our Lord Himself has declared that we must be born again,—'born of the Spirit,' so as to have spiritual tendencies and dispositions. 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit' (John iii. 3; 5—8).

And St. Paul has affirmed, 'If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new' (2 Cor. v. 17).

There are two characteristic features of the regenerate state which claim our attention. The former is, that the Spirit, when He regenerates our souls, imparts to us *every grace* of the Christian character. These graces are not to be gradually acquired in the progress of the Christian life, but are breathed into the heart by the Holy Ghost, and are the development of that inward life, and purity, and strength which He imparts. Wherever the Spirit dwells, there will be 'the fruit of the Spirit'; and that 'fruit' comprises all that is pure and lovely in human character and conduct. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof' (Gal. v. 22—24). The other characteristic feature of the regenerate state is, that it involves *power over inward and outward sin.* It is thus distinguished from the state of repentance which preceded our justification through Christ. The conflict between the convictions of an enlightened judgment and conscience and the impulses which prompt to unholy feeling and action need never issue, as it too often before did, in the triumph of sin within the breast. 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' makes us 'free from the law of sin and of death' (Rom. viii. 2). St. John, in his first Epistle, repeatedly affirms this characteristic of the regenerate state, and teaches us that while we cleave to Christ, and retain that hidden power which His Spirit imparts, we shall be enabled to triumph over every form of evil. 'Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin; because His seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God' (iii. 9). 'We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not' (v. 18).

It is important to bear in mind this lofty privilege of all

who are truly regenerate. There is a danger lest it should be regarded as belonging only to the state of entire sanctification: but this would be to depreciate the inestimable privilege of our regeneration by the Spirit. True it is that the graces of the Christian character are often found in a state of comparative feebleness and immaturity, and that they have to be nourished through the whole course of the Christian life. The varied provisions of Divine grace and the discipline of Divine Providence are intended to mature and perfect them. But no Christian needs to succumb to the power of evil, if he only watches unto prayer. In every conflict he may triumph, sustained by the hidden grace which Christ imparts. Clothed with 'the armour of God,' wielding 'the sword of the Spirit,' and continuing instant in prayer, he may 'withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, may stand.'

CHAPTER V.

PROGRESSIVE AND ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

THE restoration of man to *holiness* is the great end of the scheme of redemption. The Lord Jesus 'gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works' (Titus ii. 14). The gospel sets forth the counsel of the Eternal Father to raise us through Christ to a conformity to His own character, and the ultimate enjoyment of His glory; and the charge is addressed to us, 'As He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living: because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy' (1 Peter i. 15, 16).

We have already considered the provisions of the Christian economy for the justification and renewal of all who come to Christ; and we have seen that the Holy Spirit is given to believers to dwell in their hearts, to implant within them every holy principle and affection, and to enable them to triumph over every evil tendency. But the Christian life is to involve a progressive advancement in holiness; and there are placed before us, as attainable, deliverance from inward sin, and a matured state of every Christian grace.

It is not necessary to adduce more than a few of the passages which refer to the duty and privilege of believers to increase in spiritual affections. The Apostle Peter closes his second Epistle with the exhortation, 'But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' St. Paul prays for the Thessalonians, 'And the Lord make you to

increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you; to the end He may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints' (1 Thess. iii. 12, 13). Similar sentiments are found in his prayers for other Churches; and they recognise not only continual growth in holiness, but the attainment of Christian maturity, as the privilege of believers. We would especially direct attention to his prayer for the Philippian Church (i. 9—11), and that for the Colossians (i. 9—13), both of which are remarkably comprehensive, and illustrate the lofty spiritual attainments which are held forth to us in Christ.

The chief instrument employed by the Holy Spirit in the progressive sanctification of believers is *the truth of Christ.* We cannot forget that our Lord, in His high-priestly prayer, offered the petition, 'Sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth' (John xvii. 17). That truth, the 'word' which the Saviour Himself has given to us from the Father,—the 'word' which declares His character, His purposes, His government, and especially the provisions of the mediatorial economy,—is to be treasured up by us in our memory and our heart, that we may be more and more assimilated to our Lord and Head. This is beautifully set forth in the Apostolic writings, and we would refer especially to 2 Cor. iii. 18; 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; 1 Peter ii. 1, 2.

In order to derive from the word of God the spiritual nourishment which it is designed to afford, that word must be read in secret, and prayerfully meditated upon. But the public ministration of the truth is also designed to contribute to the establishment and perfecting of believers, as well as to the awakening of careless men, and the subduing of them to the obedience of faith. The Apostle Paul has impressively exhibited this purpose of the Lord Jesus in the raising up of the Christian pastorate, in Ephes. iv. 11—16.

The discipline of Divine Providence, also, calling into exercise the varied graces of the Christian character, is de-

signed to strengthen and mature them. Some of the trials to which the faith and submission of Christians are subjected are severe and protracted; but our adorable Lord watches over the process of trial, and will not suffer it to pass beyond the limit of our strength. That trial, too, is intended to contribute to the establishment of our Christian principles and our ultimate and everlasting triumph. These sentiments are forcibly expressed by St. Peter in his first Epistle (i. 6, 7), and by St. Paul in Rom. v. 3—5.

In some of the passages which have been referred to as bearing on the progressive sanctification of believers, there is a distinct reference to *Christian perfection*. That perfection does not imply freedom from error or infirmity, or from that depression of mind which may sometimes result from the weakness or derangement of the physical system. It does not imply freedom from temptation and conflict; for even our blessed Master, the perfect Pattern of humanity, on whose spirit not the least stain of sin was ever found, was repeatedly assailed by the Prince of the powers of darkness. Nor does it imply that no further progress in holiness can be made; for as the truth of Christ opens itself yet more and more fully to the mind, under the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, our graces may become yet more and more confirmed and established. The perfection of which the Scriptures speak implies only deliverance from inward evil, and the maturity of the Christian character, as it is to exist and develop itself in this world of weakness, and pain, and conflict, and trial.

We have seen that it is the doctrine of the New Testament, that all who are united to Christ by faith become 'new creatures' in Him. There is a new life diffused through their souls by the Holy Ghost; and now they breathe, as it were, in a new element, their hearts expand with new affections, and they aspire to new delights. Now the maturity of the Christian character implies that this life shall develop itself, not feebly and fitfully, but strongly, uniformly, constantly,

so that all our energies shall be devoted to Christ's service, and our whole life be a humble and unassuming manifestation of Christian principle. The graces which adorn our renewed nature must have a vigour and depth which shall cause them to appear even when outward circumstances are most adverse and trying. Our submission to God must involve the habitual placing of ourselves, with all our interests, and hopes, and circumstances, at His disposal. Our love to Him must be supreme,—the heart habitually turning to Him as its centre and portion; and it must be so established as to exclude from within us every thing contrary to itself. Our trust in God must be a settled and constant principle, and must be maintained amidst all the trials and conflicts of earth. And a sacred reverence of His majesty—not such as to repel us from Him, but such as can commingle with childlike confidence—must chasten our more joyous emotions. So, too, our love to our fellow-men must be a powerful, uniform, all-pervading affection, banishing from our hearts every unkind feeling, and prompting us to render to them every real service. And our self-control must be habitually maintained, so that our 'moderation' shall be 'known unto all men,' and our body, preserved in 'sanctification and honour,' shall ever be a temple of the Holy Ghost.

It is instructive to dwell on the *different aspects* under which this state of grace is presented in the writings of the Apostles. We may first adduce the exhortation of St. Paul to the Corinthian Church,—an exhortation which enforces the duty of seeking entire deliverance from evil, while it sets forth the attainableness of this great blessing. 'We are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to Me sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and

spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God' (2 Cor. vi. 16; vii. 1). Here the sins of men are distributed into two classes, those which are connected with the appetites of the body, and those which are purely mental and spiritual, as pride, unsubmissiveness to the Divine will, and the seeking of our own glory as the end of life; and the exhortation is, that we should *cleanse* ourselves from every thing that has the character of *moral defilement*, whether connected with our physical appetites, or, on the other hand, with sins of the spirit; while we exhibit every grace of the Christian character in its maturity, and its beautiful combination with every other grace. It is important, too, to mark the grounds on which this exhortation is urged. The promises which the Apostle adduces are not distinct and specific promises of entire sanctification, but great general promises the fulfilment of which all true believers in some degree experience. God dwells among His people; He reveals His presence in the midst of them as He does nowhere else on earth; nay, He dwells in them individually. He, too, is their covenant-God; and He is their Father, delighting to impart to them all spiritual blessing. These are the promises to which St. Paul appeals; and while they warn us not to allow any thing which would be offensive to the Divine purity, they encourage us to come to God to have every evil tendency removed, and to receive that spiritual power which will establish every holy principle and affection.

Equally striking and comprehensive is St. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians:—'And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thess. v. 23). Here the sanctifying grace of God is represented as *pervading our entire nature*, consecrating to Him all the energies of our intellect, all the warmth of our affections, and all the powers of our physical constitution; and as exerted *at all times* so as to keep us from sin, and preserve us blameless to the issue of our probation. And then, to show us that this is not merely a beautiful ideal which we may strive to realise,

but strive in vain, St. Paul adds, 'Faithful is He that calleth you, who will also do it.'

We may next take the prayer of St. Paul for the Ephesians:—'For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God' (Ephes. iii. 14—19). The maturity of the Christian character is here presented to us under a different aspect from that in which it is set forth in the passages already adduced. The first thing made prominent is the abounding of *spiritual strength*, to be directly communicated by the Holy Ghost, and involving a most intimate union with Christ, so that believers, brought into *sympathy with Him in His love*, shall know the depth of that love, and realise the fulness of Divine communications.

The remarkable prayer which closes the Epistle to the Hebrews is rich in instruction on the subject before us:—'Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, with the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen' (Heb. xiii. 20, 21). In this passage the *practical* character of Christian holiness is impressively recognised, and that holiness is represented as embracing *every thing that is right and lovely* in human character and conduct. The declared will of God, also, is set forth as the standard of rectitude, to which we are to be conformed; while the inward operation of His Spirit is made prominent as that which only can impart and sustain the power of spiritual obedience.

The view under which St. John loves to present the maturity of the Christian character is that of *perfect love* to God and to man. That love, he teaches us, will banish all slavish fear of God, all shy distrust of coming into His presence; but he especially lays stress on the consideration, that love to God, if it is genuine and sincere, and still more if it is mature and perfect, will be combined both with a special affection to our brethren in Christ and with love to all mankind, and that these affections will be evinced in our whole deportment and conduct. While, however, he thus admonishes us, he employs the strongest language to show the completeness of the purity which we may attain:—'Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, even so are we in this world' (1 John iv. 17).

These are only a few of the passages of the New Testament which set forth the perfection of the Christian character. But they will suffice to illustrate the variety and fulness of its teaching on the subject, and to show how high and glorious are the attainments to which we may rise in Christ.

CHAPTER VI.

PRIVILEGES CONNECTED WITH THE CHRISTIAN SALVATION.

THE privileges of those who are in Christ are great and ample. Some of them, indeed, belong essentially to the Christian salvation, and have, therefore, already passed under review. But there are others which claim distinct mention.

1. Among these we may first name *confiding access to God in prayer.*

All men, indeed, are permitted to draw near to God through the adorable Mediator; and the returning penitent is cheered by the assurance, that his confessions of sin and earnest supplications for pardon shall be graciously regarded, as he comes in the name of the Lord Jesus, and rests on Him alone. But the justified and regenerate man has filial access to God. He is admitted to intimate communion with Him; and he is encouraged 'in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving' to make 'his request known unto God.' No shy distrust now keeps him at a distance; but he can pour out his soul, with all its cares and sorrows, its hopes and fears, to his heavenly Father.

In their approaches to God, also, believers have the special aid of the Holy Ghost. It is under His influence, as He dwells in our hearts, as 'the Spirit of adoption,' that 'we cry Abba, Father.' The new life which He imparts and sustains evinces itself in spiritual aspirations, and in the utterances of childlike confidence and love; while it leads us to seek a perfect conformity to the Divine will. It is the privilege of all believers to enjoy, through His gracious working, habitual

fellowship with God. Thus St. Paul, after referring to the union of Jews and Gentiles in the common salvation, as realised in Christ Jesus, adds, 'For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father' (Ephes. ii. 18).

There is a remarkable passage, bearing on this subject, in St. Paul's enumeration of Christian privileges in Rom. viii. 26, 27. He had set forth the agency of the Holy Spirit in rescuing us, upon our embracing the Lord Jesus, from our thraldom to sin, in assuring us of our sonship to God, in inspiring the hope of that consummated glory to which our sonship confers a title, and in imparting to us the earnest of that perfect blessedness; and then he adds, 'And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered: and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' Thus he teaches us, that the Holy Spirit's action on the believing mind has a special relation to our present state as one of *weakness* and *sorrow*, and, in illustration of this truth, he adverts to the light, and power, and comfort which He imparts to us in prayer. Under the varying circumstances of life, and the manifold fluctuations of inward feeling, we may sometimes not know precisely what we should ask of God, and, if left to ourselves, we should not present our supplications in the very frame of mind in which they should be offered. But the Spirit comes to our aid; and, shedding light on the plans of God towards us, and melting our hearts into the temper of simple, reverent, submissive, confiding devotion, 'He maketh intercession for us,' enabling us to plead with God with a power which is not our own. And the prayers which He thus inspires are heard and answered. Our failure to give full and exact expression to the hallowed desires which the Spirit calls forth will not bar the answer of peace and comfort. For in thus moving upon our hearts, He 'maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' Thus,

under the pressure of our weakness and trials, we are brought into communion with the Triune Deity; our troubled spirits are calmed and strengthened; and, even when we are just ready to sink under our burden, we are upheld and gladdened with the foretaste of eternal life.

2. A second privilege connected with the Christian salvation is *a special interest in the arrangements of Divine Providence.*

We have seen that the care of God extends to the whole Universe, and that man, in particular, is the object of His regard. Under the present economy of grace, too, the course of Divine Providence is ordered so as to co-operate with the strivings of the Holy Spirit, to awaken men to reflection, to melt them into penitence, and to lead them to the Saviour. But while men continue impenitent, the dispensations of God towards them include manifestations of displeasure as well as overtures of grace. When, however, we have embraced the Saviour, and are accepted in Him, all the attributes of God have a favourable aspect towards us, and all His dispensations are directed to our welfare. And thus St. Paul immediately adds to the passage just referred to, 'And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to His purpose' (Rom. viii. 28). Fixing his regard on the grand consummation to which the scheme of grace is directed,—even the assimilation of all Christ's people to Himself, and their eternal participation of His glory, so that He shall stand throughout eternity as 'the Firstborn among many brethren,'—he teaches us that all the events of life are subordinated to that great result. These events are not isolated; there is a *plan* in God's dealings with His people, and all that He permits to come upon them from without is taken up into this plan, and contributes to the grand issue which He has in view. And on this truth he founds the exulting appeal, 'If God is for us, who is against us?' He who reigns over the Universe, and who can control every created agency, is on our side; and thus we may pass through the scenes of earth, assured that 'nothing shall in any wise

hurt us,' but that the discipline of the present state—trying and painful as it may sometimes be—shall conduce to our highest and eternal interests.

The Christian revelation, indeed, assures us that even *death* itself, humiliating and painful as it is, shall, in the case of the Christian, assume a character different from that which it bore as a part of the original curse, and shall be overruled for good. We have on record the words of our Lord Himself, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My word, he shall never see death' (John. viii. 51); and St. Paul has given utterance to the animating and consolatory declaration, 'All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's' (1 Cor. iii. 21—23).

3. Another privilege connected with the Christian salvation is *spiritual fellowship with all who are in Christ Jesus*.

The design of our Lord is, that His people should be *one in Him*. Through His vicarious death, followed by His glorious resurrection and ascension, He has abolished the distinctions of former dispensations; and the new life which His Spirit breathes into every believing mind—a life derived from Himself as the Head of the universal Church—unites us to each other. There is a rich fulness of truth in the declaration of St. Paul, 'For He is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that He might *create in Himself* of the twain *one new man*, so making peace' (Ephes. ii. 14, 15). And we gladly turn to our Lord's high-priestly prayer, as affording the most profound views of the spiritual unity existing between all who are truly His (John xvii. 20—23).

It is, indeed, deeply to be regretted, that the Church on earth only imperfectly presents to the world the realisation of this beautiful ideal; for the rivalries and jealousies which sometimes actuate Christian communities in their relations to each other

are contrary to the mind of our Lord, and impair the influence of Christianity on the world around. But, on the other hand, the true unity of the Church is not to be confounded with the uniformity of a common discipline and government; nor does it imply perfect agreement of sentiment on things which are not essential. In regard to these things there may be many and great diversities among those who are equally devoted to the Saviour. But there is a real and vital unity between all who are really in Christ. Not only is there the common reception of the same fundamental truths, and the common avowal of the name of Christ in the sacraments of our holy religion; but there is the unity of a common subjection to the same Head, so that our souls respond to every intimation of His will,—the unity of a common participation of the same Spirit, assimilating us to our Lord and Head,—the unity of a common relation to our Father, God, in virtue of our union with the Incarnate Son,—and the unity of a common hope of eternal life (Ephes. iv. 4—6).

Now the consciousness of this oneness with our brethren in Christ is a source of *comfort* and *strength*. With some of them we are brought into personal intercourse; and sacred and delightful are the opportunities of common worship and united prayer which are sometimes afforded to us, more especially when brethren of different communions meet together in the name of our common Saviour. And, apart from this fraternal intercourse, the knowledge that we are in sympathy with all the truly devout and humble who believe in Jesus exerts a consolatory and elevating influence upon our minds. Nor is it a little thing that we have an interest in their prayers. It is an encouraging thought that St. Paul exhorts believers to pray 'with all prayer and supplication at all seasons in the Spirit, watching thereunto in all perseverance and *supplication for all the saints*' (Ephes. vi. 18). We stand not alone in our conflicts, our sorrows, and our chastened joys. 'We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another' (Rom. xii. 5).

Nor is the communion of saints altogether interrupted by the stroke of the last enemy. Personal converse, indeed, is set aside; and, instead of the intercourse which often cheered us amidst the toils and conflicts of the Christian life, we have now only the remembrance of that 'faith and patience' through which our departed brethren have entered into rest, and 'obtained the promise' of eternal blessing. It would be contrary to the entire spirit of our religion to offer to them any homage, or to have recourse to them for any benefit. Our exclusive trust must be placed in the one Mediator, who always hears us, and through whom we have access to the Father. But we are still one with them in Christ. The same spiritual life, derived from the presence and energy of the Spirit of Christ, pervades their hearts and ours; the same holy affections attract them and us to the great Source of purity and strength. And thus the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when speaking of the glorious relations of the gospel-church, affirms that we 'are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to *the spirits of just men made perfect*, and to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel' (xii. 22—24).

4. Thus are we led to the fourth leading privilege connected with the Christian salvation. We have an interest in *the ministry of angels*.

The Sacred Scriptures have disclosed to us the fact that there are holy and happy beings, favoured with the immediate vision of the Divine presence, who take the deepest interest in the spiritual welfare of mankind, and in the development and administration of the mediatorial economy. Our Lord Himself affirmed, that 'there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.' The Incarnate Son was to the angelic hosts the Object of profound interest

while He was here upon earth; they traced His footsteps, and watched His whole career of service and suffering; and they rejoiced to celebrate the triumph of His resurrection, and welcomed Him as their own exalted Lord as He ascended to His glory. Even now they 'desire to look into the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them'; and they place themselves with cheerfulness and gratitude at the service of the adorable Mediator. They are Christ's commissioned ministers, 'sent forth' by Him 'to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation.' The services which they render to us cannot, indeed, be apprehended by sense, or distinctly appreciated; but, as the ministers of Him who is the Fountain of all grace and strength, they contribute to our comfort and succour, and, it may be, influence in a manner which we cannot explain the course of events around us. They cannot, indeed, have that exquisite sympathy with us which results from the possession of a common nature, and the experience of common joys and sorrows: but they do cherish a lively and benignant interest in our progress and our triumphs. And throughout eternity they will mingle with us in the happy society of heaven, and with us will celebrate the love and grace of Him who stooped from the throne of His glory to redeem and save us.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE AND FINAL TRIUMPH.

IT is an important fact that our probation is not terminated when we are accepted in Christ and renewed by His Spirit. As the sons of God we have a title to the inheritance that His love has provided, while the spiritual affections which the Holy Ghost has breathed into our souls fit us for the enjoyment of His glory. 'If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' But we are still in a state of trial; and our holy principles have to be maintained amidst adverse influences, and to be nourished with unceasing vigilance and care. Our position is one of conflict and effort; and it is only when the present life closes that our victory is secure.

The Saviour has Himself taught us that our union with Him, which is the only source of spiritual fruitfulness, may be severed through our own guilty unfaithfulness and neglect. 'I am the true Vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.' 'If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned' (John xv. 1, 2; 6).

In the writings of the Apostles we meet with exhortations and warnings which clearly imply the possibility of believers falling from grace, and continuing in this state of separation from Christ so as eternally to perish. It will suffice to quote a few of them. St. Paul, referring to his own spiritual efforts and conflicts, recognises the possibility of ultimate failure, if

those efforts were remitted, and he should become careless. 'I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected' (1 Cor. ix. 26, 27). Immediately he proceeds to remind the Corinthian believers of the monitory history of the ancient Israelites; and, after cautioning them against the sins by which so many of God's ancient people fell, he adds, 'Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' (x. 11, 12). In the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the most powerful exhortations to the continued exercise of faith, to perseverance in duty, and to patience under trial, in order to the ultimate attainment of the consummated glory placed before us; and these exhortations are enforced by the consideration, that it is possible for those who were accounted righteous in Christ, and enjoyed spiritual life in Him, to 'draw back unto perdition' (Heb. x. 35—39).

But, while we hold this solemn and admonitory truth, we must not suppose that God is indifferent to the stability of His people, or overlooks the provision which He has made for their establishment and their final and everlasting triumph. His counsel to bless mankind in Christ Jesus looks forward to the glorification of all who are united to the Saviour. In the carrying out of that counsel He 'calls us into His own kingdom and glory' (1 Thess. ii. 12). Our calling, our justification, our admission to all the privileges of sonship, our progressive and complete sanctification, are all directed to the great consummation that we should be presented 'before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy.' And all the dispensations of His providence are subordinated to this result. This consideration sheds light on the trials by which His people are exercised. Some of these may appear to us mysterious; but they are directed to the maturing of our Christian graces, and especially to the perfecting of our faith, so that it may be

'found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.'

It is instructive to view the gracious provisions of the Christian economy as specially directed to the stability and final triumph of believers.

Among these we must ever make prominent the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He is given to us to '*seal*' us as the people of God: and while we cherish and follow His gracious influence we are safe. He warns of danger near; and if we only lift our hearts to God for succour in the very moment of trial, He strengthens us to resist it. All the assaults of the great adversary will be powerless to harm us, if only we follow the monitions of the Spirit, and cleave to Christ our Lord.

Then, again, the written word of God is designed to guard us against the dangers to which we are exposed,—to guide us in the path of duty,—and to perfect our spiritual affections. That word is to 'dwell in us richly in all wisdom'; and we are charged to give earnest heed to it, lest we should relax our hold of its momentous truths and its precious promises.

Still further, the leading arrangements of the visible Church—arrangements designed by Christ Himself—are intended to have an important bearing on our stability and final triumph. The labours of the Christian pastorate are to be directed to this result. It is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus to raise up, from time to time, men whom He specially qualifies to unfold His truth, and minister to the comfort and establishment of His people. He has given some to be 'pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (Ephes. iv. 11—13). Christian fellowship, too, is to contribute to our holding fast our profession, and our increase in holy affections. A special blessing rests on our communion with each other at the table of the Lord, when, as members of the one body of Christ, we avow our

trust in His sacrifice,—that sacrifice which was once offered on Calvary, and which, as our High Priest, He lives to present for us in the heavenly sanctuary. And the arrangements of the Church should include a provision for the mutual exhortation of believers, as a branch of Christian communion, and as specially conducive to our perseverance in the Christian life. Thus the Apostle, writing to the Hebrews, after exhorting them to 'hold fast the confession of their hope that it waver not, for He is faithful that promised,' adds, 'And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day drawing nigh' (x. 23—25). And in an earlier part of the Epistle he writes, 'Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day, lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end' (iii. 12—14).

It is an encouraging consideration, also, that God Himself watches over the circumstances of our probation, and so orders the course of events, and so restrains our spiritual foes, that our trials shall never exceed the limits of our strength. Thus St. Paul immediately subjoins to the solemn warnings which he addresses to the Corinthians, the cheering declaration, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it' (1 Cor. x. 13).

Thus, then, it is our privilege to stand unmoved in our Christian profession, and constantly to advance in spiritual affections. If we take unto us 'the whole armour of God,' and 'continue instant in prayer,' we shall 'be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.' Holding fast our faith in Christ, and maintaining the spirit of humble and entire

devotedness to Him, we shall 'be found in Him' when our summons comes. Kept 'by the power of God through faith,' we shall attain at last the perfect 'salvation' which He has provided for His people. Our probationary life, indeed, will close amidst the languor and humiliation of the final conflict; but the last enemy will be divested of his terrors. With the Apostle Paul we shall be enabled to exclaim, 'O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. xv 55—57).

Section V.

THE FUTURE LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH.

IN an earlier Chapter, when considering the subject of Natural Theology, we have adverted to the evidence of a future life which we possess independently of revelation. The powers of the human mind, and especially its power of self-control, show that it is, in its own nature, distinct from the body, though in the present state most intimately united to it, and to a large extent dependent upon it; and thus they create a presumption that it may exist, when its connection with the material organisation which it actuated is dissolved. But a far stronger evidence is afforded by the moral nature of man, and by the fact to which our conscience bears witness, that we are living under a moral constitution, the grand feature of which is retribution. To cite again the impressive words of Professor Wace, 'It is the characteristic of conscience to warn a man of a future judgment even when he escapes all visible penalty. The conviction it enforces is not merely that certain consequences will follow our evil deeds, but that we deserve certain penalties, and that we must expect them to be inflicted because we deserve them. It is a conviction, in other words, that we are responsible, and that we shall be held to our responsibility.'

But the great truth of a future life is placed beyond a doubt by the revelation which God has given to us. In the Scriptures of the Old Testament there are many passages which clearly imply that the human soul continues to live when the body dies,—that the future state is one of happiness or of suffering, according to the character and conduct of men in the present life,—and that God will at length bring all men into judgment before Him. And when we look at the teaching of the ancient Scriptures in the light shed upon it in the New Testament, we find this doctrine intimated in many passages in which it is not expressly affirmed; and we are assured that a better life to come was an object of faith to the patriarchs, and sustained them in their labours and trials. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, more particularly, this truth is emphatically presented to us. Having spoken of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, together with Sarah, the writer says, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own. And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city' (xi. 13—16).

But on the subject before us we have the explicit teaching of our Lord Himself. In all His discourses He recognised the truth that this life is introductory to a future life far different in character, and marked especially as one of retribution. To a few of His declarations we may now advert.

His parable of the rich man and Lazarus affirms, in the clearest manner, the truth which we are considering. 'And it came to pass that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his [illegible]yes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and

Lazarus in his bosom' (Luke xvi. 22, 23). And the separation between the two was irreversible. Abraham is represented as declaring, in reply to the appeal of the rich man, 'And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us' (ver. 26). No words can teach us more distinctly that the soul of man consciously exists when it leaves the body,—that it passes into a state either of happiness or of misery,—and that its condition is then determined.

In the parable of the unjust steward, which was apparently delivered just before this, there is a remarkable expression which shows how the doctrine of a future life moulded the phraseology of our blessed Lord. Applying to our position as stewards the lesson of forethought as to the future,—that forethought, however, being exercised in accordance with the high principles which should regulate the conduct of 'the sons of the light,' the Saviour says, 'And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles' (Luke xvi. 9). Thus He charges us faithfully to employ that worldly property which too often leads the soul away from God and is perverted to unhallowed uses, so that they who are blessed by our bounty and watched over by our care may welcome us, when our change comes, into the everlasting abodes of peace and joy.

We may next advert to our Lord's conversation with the Sadducees, when they sought to perplex Him with a case which, in their view, would introduce confusion into the relations of the future life. First of all, He pointed out that those relations are different from those of earth:—'Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven' (Matt. xxii. 29, 30). And then He proceeded to argue that the gracious announcement of God, recognising Himself as the covenant-God of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, implied the continued life of these patriarchs with Him, closing His discourse with the memorable words, 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him' (Matt. xxii. 31, 32; Luke xx. 37, 38).

Still further, our Lord's declaration to the penitent thief, as He hung upon the cross, shows that death is immediately followed by a conscious life. In answer to the prayer, 'Jesus, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom,' our Lord said to Him, 'Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise' (Luke xxiii. 42, 43).

We pass over, for the present, the declarations of our Lord respecting the final judgment, which clearly imply the existence of men after death; since these will come before us in a subsequent Chapter. But, confining ourselves to the conscious existence of the soul after death, we find this truth illustrated and confirmed in several of our Lord's conversations with His disciples, while His words assure us that the inward life which He imparts to all who truly believe in Him is one which the stroke of death cannot touch. We may especially dwell on His declaration to Martha, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die' (John xi. 25, 26).

The writings of the Apostles supply us with additional evidence of the truth, that the spirit of man exists when the physical organisation which it actuated is dissolved. The passages which are most prominent refer to those who are in Christ, and show how the life which they derive from Him goes on even when their earthly state is closed. In the earliest of St. Paul's Epistles we read, 'For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him' (1 Thess. v. 9, 10). To the Corinthians he writes, 'Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are

absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord' (2 Cor. v. 6—8). Addressing his beloved Philippians from his captivity at Rome, he thus adverts to his own anticipations and feelings:—'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if to live in the flesh,—if this is the fruit of my work, then what I shall choose I wot not. But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake' (i. 21—24). And in his last Epistle, addressed to his dearest friend Timothy, he speaks of his approaching death as 'a departure,' which would be marked by a successful and triumphant close of his Christian conflict and service (2 Tim. iv. 6—8). St. Peter, too, refers to his own decease as 'the putting off of his tabernacle,' and speaks of it in a manner which shows how calmly he contemplated it (2 Peter. i. 13, 14).

The passages now adduced from the Apostolic writings refer to the future life of believers, for it was of this that the Apostles had occasion to speak. But there are other passages which show that the ungodly live, so as to be brought into judgment, and visited with the penalty due to their transgressions. The great truth of retribution for human character and conduct, to be dispensed with perfect equity, was never absent from their minds. The time of the final recompense, indeed, is the day of the Saviour's manifestation in judgment, the anticipation of which should chasten and solemnise our minds, while it stirs us up to diligence and fidelity. 'Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God' (1 Cor. iv. 5). But the judgment that awaits all mankind, when the Lord Jesus is revealed in glory, implies that the souls of all exist in the intermediate state.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHARACTER OF THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

THE teaching of our Lord and His Apostles, traced in the preceding Chapter, clearly establishes the conscious existence of the soul after death, and sheds light on the character of the state into which it passes. That light, indeed, is partial. There are many questions left unsolved, and nothing is revealed simply to gratify our curiosity. But enough is made known to dispel the darkness of the tomb in the case of all who are in Christ, and to animate us to constancy and perseverance in the Christian life.

The intermediate state is one of *retribution;* but that retribution is *not yet perfect.* Our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus sufficiently attests the former assertion; and the latter is borne out by the general tenor of the New Testament. It is only amidst the solemnities of the final judgment, and in the scenes that will follow it, that God will fully 'render to every man according to his works.'

It is unquestionable that to the people of Christ the intermediate state is one of *blessedness,* although that blessedness is incomplete. 'I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow with them' (Rev. xiv. 13). Every one who is admitted to the Saviour's presence is freed from all sorrow, and possesses a sacred peace and joy; but even as the enthroned Redeemer is represented as waiting for the great consummation, 'from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His foot-

stool,' even so 'the spirits of just men made perfect' wait with holy expectation and desire for the higher glory reserved for them when their entire humanity shall be conformed to the image of their Lord.

The grand feature of the intermediate state in the case of true believers is, that they are *with Christ*. That one conception is itself sufficient to banish gloom and inspire an exulting hope. The passages of the New Testament which affirm this are clear and explicit. We have seen that St. Paul, when speaking of the hope that animates all believers, refers to our present state in which 'we are at home in the body,' as one in which we are 'absent from the Lord'; and adds, 'We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.' In unfolding his own feelings, when contemplating the possible issue of his impending trial at Rome, he speaks of having 'the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better.' These passages warrant us, we conceive, in applying to the intermediate state the encouraging words of our Lord, addressed to His Apostles after the last passover, though they will doubtless have their highest fulfilment at the period of His second coming:—'In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also' (John xiv. 2, 3).

On these declarations of Christ and His Apostles we rest our conviction that, whatever may have been the case with the good and holy who departed this life previously to our Lord's triumph over death, they who now die in Him are admitted to heaven itself,—that world of light, and purity, and joy in which He lives and reigns at the Father's right hand. As the Forerunner of His people, He has passed 'within the veil,' and led the way to the Father's presence; and thus He has opened heaven to all His saints whose earthly course of faith and patience has closed.

The characteristics of that state are shadowed forth in Holy Scripture rather than minutely traced. To the believer who possesses a spiritual life derived from Christ, and whose earthly life is devoted to Him, 'to die is gain.' The heavenly state is one of *freedom from pain, and sorrow, and conflict.* They who die in the Lord 'rest from their labours': they 'hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat' (Rev. vii. 16). It is one of *clearer light* and *ampler knowledge.* 'Now,' says St. Paul, 'we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known' (1 Cor. xiii. 12). It is one of *perfect purity* and of *hallowed* and *delightful worship.* Holiness, indeed, is the grand preparation for the enjoyment of its blessedness; and that holiness will never be interrupted. The saints above, too, are permitted to draw near to God, and enjoy in His worship a sacred delight. 'They are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them' (Rev. vii. 15). The heavenly state, also, is one of *happy* and *ennobling intercourse with the saints of God,* and with *the angelic hosts.* We have had occasion to dwell on the thought, that already, if we have come into 'the city of the living God,' and are invested with its privileges, we have come to 'innumerable hosts of angels,' and to 'the spirits of just men made perfect'; but when we enter that world we shall be associated with them, and enjoy, to some extent, personal intercourse. It may be that special friendships will have place in that world, and that the Christian fellowship of earth will be renewed, but under different conditions. But beyond this we would not speculate. When we attempt to conceive minutely of the associations and arrangements of the heavenly world, we are checked and restrained by the declaration, 'It is not yet made manifest what we shall be.'

But the grand feature of the heavenly state is that believers there enjoy the most intimate *union with Christ.* Their love to Christ is perfect, and the Saviour looks on them with entire

complacency. No alloy of sin, no mixture of infirmity, now attaches to any of their services. Their devotion never becomes languid; their benevolence never fluctuates or fails. The Lord Jesus has not now to address them in terms of mild reproof, as well as of complacent regard. He beholds in them nothing but the reflection of His own character; and as He thus 'sees of the travail of His soul,' He experiences a holy satisfaction. And the saints of Christ, now with Him in heaven, delight in Him without interruption, and with more serene satisfaction than ever they could do on earth. The glories of His character shine forth to their admiring gaze; and they are drawn to Him by a sweet and powerful attraction. Thus, also, there is perfect sympathy between Christ and His people. They think as He thinks; they feel as He feels. In a yet higher degree than when they toiled and suffered below, Christ dwells in them and they in Him. And, yet further, there is happy intercourse between Christ and His saints in heaven. They have no longer to realise His presence, and to hold communion with Him, by faith: they 'see Him as He is,' and His presence diffuses a sacred joy through their souls. There is a vivid consciousness of His friendship and love, pervading their minds; they even feel that His glory is theirs, at the same time that they own Him as their Lord, and bow to every intimation of His will. And we may reverently conceive, that sometimes they are permitted to converse with Him,—that they listen to His words, and mark with profound emotion the out-beamings of His excellences. This, at least, is certain, that the Saviour reveals to them the fulness of His grace, and opens to them sources of delight which are ever fresh and exhaustless (Rev. vii. 17).

But we have now to pass to the solemn and deeply affecting subject of the condition, in the intermediate state, of *the lost*,—of those who have *rejected* the grace of Christ, and whose probationary course has closed in impenitence and guilt. The representations of their condition found in the discourses of

our Lord and in the writings of the Apostles are fearfully impressive. We have seen how our Lord, in one of His parables, describes the position of the rich man who passed into eternity from a career of self-indulgence:—'The rich man also died, and was buried: and in Hades he lifted up his eyes being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame' (Luke xvi. 22—24). So, too, on another occasion, He solemnly affirmed, respecting the place of future punishment, that there 'their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched' (Mark ix. 48). In His parable of the marriage-feast, He represents the king as saying to his servants respecting the man who came to it without a wedding-garment, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matt. xxii. 13).

In respect to these representations of the condition of the lost, the question naturally suggests itself to every earnest mind, whether they are to be literally interpreted. A feeling of reverence must restrain us from positive and bold assertions on this subject; but the view that many of them are figurative may be consistently held, while it must ever be maintained that they indicate a state of awful suffering. The observations of Dr. Richard Winter Hamilton on this subject strikingly illustrate this sentiment:—'Looking into the revealed page, we discover a most uniform representation that there is a place of suffering, and not that the mind is its own place; that there is painful fellowship among the sufferers; that the Divine wrath afflicts their souls; and that sensible suffering is consequent upon a raised body and a physical restoration. One identification is dreadly recurrent. The elemental fire is the selected medium of the retribution, or of describing it. It is not the flame which bursts from within the sinner,—it is something distinct from himself: he is "cast into it," he is "tormented in it," it is "the furnace of fire," "the lake of fire." There are allusions, all

foreign to the native self-actings of the soul:—the "stripe," the "horrible tempest," the "cup of wrath," the "mist of darkness," the "taking vengeance," "the tormentors," "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," rendered. As some of these descriptions seem incapable of a literal interpretation, none may require it. We express our near approach to a conviction, —it is all we dare,—that they must not be verbally understood. Inconsistencies too violent, we think, forbid it. . . . But concede, or demand, that these can be only figures. They are figures, of least, of an alarming kind. Why are figures, and of such an order, employed? Because the naked truth, the absolute reality of the retribution, cannot be set before our mind. It is too intimate, too intense, to be made known in any abstract manner. There is no idealised, soul-like language fitted to impress and explain it. To supply the deficiency images are sought. But, therefore, it follows that if the full force of these images be understood, still a vast amount of signification lies beyond them, they being, after all, confessedly inadequate, except to shadow out the fact. Nor can guilty presumption more egregiously err than when it soothes itself by the thought that these are only images: they are only images, and consequently what they intend is inconceivably more severe. "Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? even according to Thy fear," the darkest apprehension and foreboding, "so is Thy wrath."'* The comment of the Rev. Richard Watson on the words of our Lord in Mark ix. 48, 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,' is well deserving of our attention. After adducing some considerations to show that the phrase 'appears to have been a highly metaphorical mode of expressing the highest penalties of the Divine justice upon guilty nations and individuals,' he adds, 'As the worm itself dies not, but destroys that it feeds upon, and as a fire unquenched consumes that upon which it kindles, so when temporal judgments are expressed by this phrase, the utter

* 'The Revealed Doctrine of Rewards and Punishments,' Lect. VI., pp. 322—324. 8vo. ed. 1847.

destruction of persons, cities, and nations appears to be intended; but when it refers to a future state, and the subject of punishment is, in itself, or by Divine appointment, immortal, the idea is heightened to its utmost terror; *their worm* of reflection and remorse ever gnaws; and *the fire*, which represents the severity of accumulated judgments, is never quenched.'

In considering the condition of the lost, during the intermediate state, we must not omit to reflect that there are before them the terrors of the final judgment. That day, which will be one of holy triumph to the people of Christ, will be to them one of confusion and dismay. Then they will be constrained to acknowledge, however reluctantly, the sovereignty and glory of the enthroned Redeemer; and, as the proceedings of that day terminate, they will be for ever banished from His presence.

We have spoken of the intermediate state as an *imperfect* one; but we do not regard it as one of a second probation. The people of Christ, when they pass to His presence, are eternally secure; and they who have rejected Him during their earthly probation are undone. We may refer to our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus, as showing that there is no transition from the abodes of darkness to the realms of light; and we are again and again reminded that the future judgment will have respect to 'the deeds done in the body.' Thus are we taught that the limits of our connection with earth, and of our state of trial, are the same.

CHAPTER III.

THE RESURRECTION.

IT is obvious that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is one of pure revelation. Nature throws no light upon it; and no considerations derived from the changes which living beings undergo could suggest the hope, that the body which is consigned to the tomb in dishonour and decay will be raised again to enjoy a higher life than was realised on earth. But He who is 'the Resurrection and the Life' holds forth to all His people the assurance of their ultimate triumph over death.

In the Scriptures of the Old Testament there were intimations of this truth. We may refer especially to the memorable declaration of Job:—'For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me' (Job xix. 25—27). We may refer, also, to the prediction found in Dan. xii. 2: 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.'

But it is in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ that this truth is most clearly set forth. In the discourses of the Saviour Himself the doctrine of the resurrection is emphatically taught, as it bears both on the righteous and the wicked. In that remarkable conversation with the Jews of Jerusalem which is recorded in John v., our Lord, after affirming His participation, as the Son, in the loftiest powers and prerogatives of the

Eternal Father, dwells specially on His life-giving energy and His exercise of judgment. 'For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son to have life in Himself: and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man.' And then He added, 'Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment' (vers. 26—29). St. Paul, too, in his address before Felix, avowed his 'hope toward God,' 'that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust' (Acts xxiv. 15).

While, however, the declarations of Holy Scripture distinctly set forth the resurrection of the wicked as well as of the righteous, it is the latter that is specially dwelt upon. The Saviour again and again referred to it as comprehended in the Father's scheme of grace, and as essential to the completeness of the salvation which He came to provide and to bestow. 'This,' he affirmed, 'is the will of Him that sent Me, that of all that which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day' (John vi. 39, 40). The hidden life which the Lord Jesus now imparts to His people—a life, in its own nature, indissoluble and everlasting—is ultimately to pervade their entire nature.

There is a beautiful passage, bearing on the future resurrection of believers, in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The Apostle recognises their continued subjection, in their present state, to the stern law of mortality, placing in contrast with this the inward life which pervades their spirits, as the result of their justification through Christ; and then He carries forward our views to the ultimate resurrection of the body, as assured to us both by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the fact that He who raised up our adorable Lord has given to us

His Spirit to form the earnest of our own higher and better life. 'And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you' (viii. 10, 11). All this is implied in the Apostle's language, whichever of the two readings of the latter clause is adopted. But there is an additional consideration suggested, which varies according to the precise reading that is held to be correct. If the ordinary reading is retained, as in the Revised Version, '*through* His Spirit that dwelleth in you,' the sentiment will be, that the Holy Spirit is the great Agent in the final resurrection of believers, and that just as He now communicates of Christ's resurrection-life to their souls, Himself dwelling in them as the Source of hallowed feeling, so He will, at the last, complete His work by imparting of that life to their now dishonoured bodies. But if the alternative reading be accepted, '*because* of His Spirit that dwelleth in you,' the sentiment will be, that since the body has become the temple of the Holy Ghost, it cannot be allowed permanently to remain in dishonour and decay. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost, as 'the Spirit of life,' points to a glorious issue in reference to the body which He has condescended to sanctify by His presence,—that it, too, shall share the Saviour's resurrection-life.

And this leads us to another truth, which is made prominent in the teaching of the New Testament,—that the resurrection of believers is essential to *their perfect conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ.* The counsel of the Eternal Father is, that the Incarnate Son, who stooped to become a sharer of our nature in its weakness and its sorrows, and to bear for us the penalty of sin, shall gather round Himself, in the realms of light, a new and sacred brotherhood of humanity, who shall share His triumph and His glory. 'For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son,

that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren' (Rom. viii. 29). That conformity doubtless includes a moral resemblance to His character; but it includes also a perfect assimilation to the glory of His exalted humanity. And thus St. Paul, in another Epistle, sets forth the character, position, and hopes of believers in the following impressive language:—'For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself' (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

But the thoughtful Christian will naturally turn to that sublime chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, a portion of which is read to soothe and cheer us when the stroke of the last enemy has deprived us of the companionship of those we loved. In that chapter the Apostle has shed a partial light on the glory of the resurrection-body of believers. Contrasting the body as it sinks under the power of death with its character when raised and glorified, he says, 'It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body' (1 Cor. xv. 42—44). The full import of this last expression it is difficult for us to apprehend. It implies, doubtless, that, unlike the physical organisation that we now have, the heavenly body of believers will require no supply of food, and no refreshment of sleep, and will be free from the appetites and tendencies which now connect us with earth. It implies, too, that its refined and purified structure will constitute it a fit companion for the spirit, in its greatest activity and its highest aspirations. And we may go further, and say that the body, though still material, will be raised to so exquisite a delicacy and refinement, as to have a greater affinity to spirit than to our present 'flesh and blood.' But these conceptions do not, probably, exhaust the fulness of the

Apostle's phrase. And then he crowns his representation of the glory of the resurrection-body of believers by affirming its resemblance to the glorified body of our Lord. He had dwelt with interest on the thought, that even in this world matter passes through various processes and changes, and appears in various degrees of refinement and excellence, but the grand conception which awakens his exultation is, that just as we have been assimilated to the corruptible humanity of the first Adam, in the penal consequences of whose transgression we have been involved, even so we shall be assimilated to the glorified humanity of Him who is 'of heaven,' and who, after His deep humiliation, has now ascended as a Conqueror to the realms of light. The resurrection of the dead, and especially that of His saints, will complete His victory. And in that victory His people share. Sustained by the animating hopes which His Spirit inspires, they can exclaim, as the last enemy approaches, 'O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE FINAL JUDGMENT AND ITS RESULTS.

THE great truth of the public and general judgment, like that of the resurrection of the dead, is one of pure revelation. Our own moral nature, indeed, as we have already seen, assures us of a future life of retribution. The convictions and premonitions of conscience show us that we are living under a moral constitution, the awards of which are not perfected in the present state. But the grand arrangement that all mankind, at the winding up of the mediatorial government of our Lord, will stand before His tribunal, and receive from His lips the sentence which fixes their eternal destiny, is one which revelation only could disclose.

It is the uniform teaching of the New Testament, that the final judgment will be exercised by *the Lord Jesus Christ*. He Himself repeatedly affirmed this. It is not necessary to cite His declarations at length, since they will readily occur to every thoughtful reader of His discourses. It will suffice to quote Matt. xvi. 27, 'For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He render unto every man according to His deeds'; and to refer to Matt. vii. 21—23; xxv. 31—33; John v. 26, 27.

This truth the Apostles ever regarded as an important part of the message which they were charged to deliver to men. St. Peter, addressing the company assembled in the house of Cornelius, after affirming the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and appealing, in confirmation of this fact, to His intercourse with himself and the other Apostles, 'who did eat and drink

with Him after He rose from the dead,' added, 'And He charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is He which is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead' (Acts x. 42). And St. Paul, in his address to the Athenians, enforced the command of God that all men everywhere should repent, by the declaration, that 'He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained' (Acts xvii. 30, 31). From the Apostolical Epistles we need only cite 2 Cor. v. 10, 'For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.'

The great *principles* on which the judicial decisions of the last day will proceed have been considered in the Chapter on the Moral Government of God. They are set forth by St. Paul in the opening of his argument in the Epistle to the Romans (ii. 6—11); and his words claim to be carefully and reverently pondered. These principles, as we have seen, are stated in the most general form, so as to be applicable to men under every variety of circumstances in their earthly probation. But the application of them belongs to God alone. No human mind is capable of dealing with the problems which the varying circumstances of individual men involve.

As to those to whom the Christian scheme of grace has been made known, it is evident that they will be judged according to its provisions and requirements. The Saviour's own description of the final judgment is full of instruction. 'Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee; or athirst, and gave Thee drink? And when saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in?

or naked, and clothed Thee? And when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me' (Matt. xxv. 34—40). It would, we conceive, be an error to regard these words as implying that kind and benevolent actions will form the *sole* ground of the approval of men. The language of our Lord gives prominence to the principle of devotedness to Himself, as evinced in the acknowledgment of His people in want, suffering, and persecution, as well as in the active imitation of His own benevolence. And thus also, the subsequent portion of His discourse represents the neglect of Himself, as evinced in the neglect of His people, and in a career of self-indulgence, as the ground of condemnation (Matt. xxv. 41—46).

The general statement of Holy Scripture is, that God 'will render to every man according to his works,' and that we shall be judged according to 'the things done in the body.' But while this statement gives prominence to our *outward conduct*, as manifesting the real principles of character, it must be viewed as embracing also *acts of the mind*. For we are taught that God 'will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ' (Rom. ii. 16); and St. Paul addresses to the Corinthians the exhortation, 'Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God' (1 Cor. iv. 5). There is an important sense in which faith—the faith which embraces Christ and appropriates His sacrifice—is recognised as a work. When the inquiry was proposed to our Lord, 'What must we do, that we may work the works of God?' His reply was, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent' (John vi. 28, 29). There can be no question, that this reception of Christ will be recognised as introducing men, according to the provisions of the mediatorial economy, to the Divine favour, so as to involve the cancelling of their past sins;

while it is equally clear that the fruits of faith will be adduced, —those acts of evangelical obedience in which the new life derived from Christ manifested its reality and its power. And as to those who have heard of Christ, but who have turned away from His message of grace, and refused to bow to His authority, their rejection of Him will form the ground of their condemnation. 'He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day' (John xii. 48).

The great event to which the Church looks forward is the second coming of the Lord Jesus. That coming, we believe, will introduce the final judgment. This appears to us to be the explicit teaching of our Lord Himself: 'When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, *then* shall He sit on the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats' (Matt. xxv. 31, 32). In accordance with this view we are taught that the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked will be simultaneous; that resurrection being followed, in the case of the former, by the 'life' which is God's great gift to man in Christ Jesus, and in the case of the latter by the sentence of condemnation and rejection (John v. 28, 29).

And thus we are brought to the solemn truth, that the issue of the final judgment will be *irreversible* and *eternal*. All the teaching of our Lord implies this. Some of His parables emphatically warn us that, when the sentence of exclusion from His presence has been pronounced, all applications for admission will be in vain. We may refer to His declarations recorded by St. Luke, in reply to the question, 'Lord, are they few that be saved?' 'Strive,' He said, 'to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us; and He shall answer and say to you, I know you not whence ye are; then shall ye begin

to say, We did eat and drink in Thy presence, and Thou didst teach in our streets; and He shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are: depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity' (xiii. 24—27). We may refer, also, to His parable of the ten virgins:—'And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage-feast: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not' (Matt. xxv. 10—12). And we can never lose sight of the solemn declaration with which He closed His description of the last judgment:—'And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life' (ver. 46). No words can affirm more clearly than these, that both the blessedness of the righteous, and the punishment of those who have rejected the Lord Jesus, will endure for ever. With these utterances of our Lord the teaching of His Apostles is in perfect accordance. Everywhere it is implied that the results of the judgment of the last day will be *final*. The moral distinctions which have been established on earth will remain throughout eternity.

PART IV.

THE MORAL SYSTEM OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS—THE GROUND OF MORAL OBLIGATION—THE STANDARD OF DUTY—VIRTUE.

THE Christian revelation distinctly recognises the moral nature of man. It addresses him as a moral agent, placed under a constitution of moral government, responsible to God for his principles and conduct, and destined to a future life of reward or punishment.

It is worthy of our attention, that *conscience* is appealed to as exercising important functions even in the case of those who are destitute of the written revelation. St. Paul, when unfolding the principles of the Divine administration, speaks of the Gentiles 'which have no law' as being 'a law unto themselves,' and adds, 'in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them' (Rom. ii. 14, 15). Thus he teaches us, that there is that within us which not only recognises the distinctions of right and wrong, but affirms our obligation to do that, and that only, which is right, and causes us to look forward to a future retribution.

It is important, also, to observe, that throughout the Christian revelation certain principles and actions are referred to as *morally beautiful and good.* In almost every instance the expression rendered 'good works' conveys the idea now indicated. There is one passage, in particular, in which the beauty of moral rectitude is dwelt upon, and the obligation resting upon us to maintain and delight in universal rectitude

is strongly enforced. 'Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things' (Phil. iv. 8).

There is no formal statement in the Scriptures of *the ground of moral obligation*. Various theories have been advanced on this subject by writers on moral science. The question, 'Why is an affection, or an action, right?' has been largely discussed, as has also the allied, but very different, inquiry, 'How may it be ascertained to be right?' But the Scriptures, without entering into these questions, supply us with sufficient answers to them. Three things are clearly implied in the teaching of the Christian revelation.

1. It is implied that certain principles and actions are *right in themselves*, as required by the nature of man, and the relations in which he stands to God and his fellow-men. There is an essential rectitude in certain affections and principles, and in the practical development of them in our outward conduct; and there is an essential baseness in the opposite principles and the opposite line of conduct. Generally speaking, our *duties* may be said to result from the *relations* in which we are placed; though there are some duties, as the proper direction and control of our energies and desires, which might have had place independently of these relations, although they have also an important bearing upon them.

2. It is affirmed in the Christian revelation, that the *character of God* is the *archetype* and *pattern* of moral excellence. He alone is essentially and perfectly '*good*.' All the essential principles which constitute moral rectitude exist in Him; and the moral excellence of all creatures is derived from Him, and is the reflection of His uncreated glories. Conformity to His character is the highest attainment to which man can aspire; and it is solemnly binding on all His people to seek and maintain it. Thus St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, 'Be

ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children' (v. 1); and St. Peter urges the exhortation, 'As He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, 'Ye shall be holy, for I am holy' (1 Peter i. 15, 16).

3. While the inherent and essential rectitude of certain principles and actions is distinctly recognised, it is explicitly affirmed that *the revealed will of God* is, to all to whom it is made known, *the standard and rule of duty*. To the Divine Mind all the relations which exist throughout the Universe are known and obvious; and the perfect intelligence and unfailing rectitude of God qualify Him to define the duties which correspond to those relations. Besides, as the relation in which we stand to God, as the Author and Sustainer of our being, is the *first* of our relations, there is the general duty binding upon us, antecedently to every other, to obey His injunctions and to please Him in all things. And then He is the Moral Ruler of the Universe; and the expression of His will stamps the authority of *law* on every thing which He enjoins. *To do the will of God* is, therefore, at once the duty and the blessedness of every rational creature. Our Lord has taught us to pray, 'Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth;' and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews closes it with the prayer, 'Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.'

But the science of morals not only embraces the consideration of moral rectitude in itself, and the standard by which it is to be ascertained, but includes also the consideration of *virtue* in a moral agent. It is possible for an individual to perform an action which is itself right, and yet be destitute of the motives and principles which are essential to constitute it a virtuous act. In order to this, there must be a settled regard

to it as right and good, and as pleasing to Him who has brought us into being, and to obey whom is our first and highest duty. *Christian virtue*, more especially, implies that the character is formed by the operation of the Spirit of Christ, and is thus assimilated to His. For HE now stands as the Pattern of holiness to all His people, exhibiting human virtues in connection with the essential glories of the Divine Nature.

CHAPTER II.

THE MORAL LAW.

GOD has spoken to man. He has revealed to us our duty, and at the same time has disclosed to us the provisions of His grace, through which the conscience oppressed with the burden of guilt may be relieved of its load, and the inward principles of righteousness may be implanted in the heart. There has been a gradual and progressive development of the Divine counsel; and, while the scheme of mercy has been unfolded with increasing clearness, the discoveries of the will of God as to the duties of men have, under the Christian economy, been completed and perfected.

The leading precepts of the moral law were issued from Mount Sinai under circumstances of peculiar solemnity. The *ten commandments* stand as the expression of the mind of God as to the duties which we owe to Himself and to our fellow-men, and as to that self-control which we should habitually exercise.

Many things conspire to invest the ten commandments with peculiar importance, and to distinguish them from the ceremonial and civil injunctions which were given to the Israelites through Moses. God Himself uttered them from amidst the thick darkness of Sinai. He wrote them on the two tables of stone. These tables were placed within the ark of the covenant, the covering or lid of which was the mercy-seat, on which the high priest of Israel sprinkled the blood of atonement on the great day of expiation. This circumstance is one of peculiar interest. The ark stood within the holy of holies, which the

author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has taught us to regard as symbolical of the heavenly sanctuary. It formed the emblem of Jehovah's throne of grace and righteousness under the mediatorial economy; and the fact that the two tables of the law were deposited in it recognised the ten commandments as the law of God, the violation of which had rendered atonement necessary, and the dominion of which the economy of grace was designed to re-establish in the heart of man.

It is important, also, to remember, that the ten commandments were repeatedly referred to by our Lord and His Apostles, as binding upon men. Not to advert, at present, to the Sermon on the Mount, it will suffice to mention our Lord's reply to the rich young man who came to Him with the question, 'Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?' 'Why askest thou Me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments.' And when the young man rejoined 'Which?' Jesus answered, 'Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Matt. xix. 16—19). Here the Saviour emphatically recognises the Decalogue as containing 'the commandments' of God. In the same manner St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, refers to the Decalogue as 'the law':—'I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet' (vii. 7): 'He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (xiii. 8, 9). So also, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, after citing the words, 'Honour thy father and mother,' he adds, 'Which is the first commandment with promise' (vi. 2).

As the Mosaic economy went on, successive prophets were raised up, who enforced the duties of men, and denounced the

sins of which the professed people of God were guilty. This, indeed, was one of the leading functions of the prophetic office; and some of the most impressive passages of the ancient Scriptures are those in which the prophets affirm the worthlessness of outward services if the heart is estranged from God, and the life is polluted with acts of allowed transgression. We may refer, in illustration, to Isaiah i. 10—20.

But the Lord Jesus has brought out the far-reaching import of the Divine commandments more clearly and fully than any preceding prophet; and He has added His own injunctions, marked by their spirituality and their heart-searching power. In His Sermon on the Mount He cited several precepts of the Decalogue, and showed they do not merely forbid the outward acts of sin, but the feelings and desires which, if allowed and cherished, might lead to those acts. He referred to the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' and then He pointed out that this precept forbids the indulgence of any malignant or unkind feeling, and He added the memorable injunction, 'If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' He referred to the command, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' and then He added, 'I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart' (Matt. v. 21, 23; 27, 28). In a subsequent part of that discourse, He denounced the insidious evil of covetousness, affirming with great solemnity, 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon'; and He issued the command, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also' (Matt. vi. 19—21; 24).

These instances will suffice to illustrate one grand feature of

our Lord's moral teaching. His precepts reach to the inmost springs of feeling and action. He does not seek merely to restrain men from the overt acts of evil, but rather to purify their hearts, and thus to qualify them for a course of practical obedience. 'Either make the tree good, and its fruit good: or make the true corrupt, and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by its fruit' (Matt. xii. 33). When the Pharisees and Scribes complained to Him that His disciples disregarded the tradition, that they should, on every occasion, wash their hands before partaking of food, He reproved them for making void the commandment of God by their tradition, and then He enlarged on the truth, that 'not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man, but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man;' and He affirmed in illustration of this sentiment, 'The things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart, and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man' (Matt. xv. 11, 18—20).

Our Lord has further given us a beautiful and instructive *summary* of the moral law. When the question was proposed to Him, 'Master, which is the great commandment in the law?' He replied, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets' (Matt. xxii. 36—40). Thus He not only affirmed that supreme love to God stands first among our duties, as having respect to the first and most important relation in which any creature can stand, and as the principle which will prompt us to universal obedience to His will; but He declared that this love to God and the allied principle of love to our fellow-men form the essence of moral rectitude, and that all the precepts of the Divine law may be resolved into them. St. Paul re-echoes the sentiment of our Lord in the words, 'Love

is the fulfilment of the law' (Rom. xiii. 10). If this great principle actuates and controls the mind, we shall sacredly recognise every obligation resulting from the relations in which we stand,—we shall guard with scrupulous care against invading the rights of others, or doing anything that would be injurious to them in their person, their property, or their reputation,—and we shall feel a rich satisfaction in promoting the happiness of those around us,—while a profound regard to God will regulate and govern all our principles and conduct.

But we are not left in the Christian Scriptures without many explicit directions as to *particular* duties. The great principles of duty, indeed, are not traced out in all their possible applications; but the teaching of our Lord embraces several injunctions bearing on the circumstances in which men may be placed; and the writings of the Apostles contain particular precepts and exhortations, which show their deep solicitude for the purity of the Churches, and the exertion by them of a corrective and elevating influence upon the world.

CHAPTER III.

OUR DUTIES TO GOD.

THERE is a beautiful passage in St. Paul's Epistle to Titus, in which he classifies the duties that devolve upon us, while he enforces the truth, that the provisions of grace in Christ are designed to lead us to the uniform and constant observance of them all:—'For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works' (ii. 11—14). The classification thus suggested is both correct and convenient. Under the term 'godliness' are included all the duties which we owe to God; 'righteousness' expresses those which we owe to our fellow-men; and 'sobriety' embraces those which we owe to ourselves, fixing our minds, more particularly, on that habitual self-control which is an essential element of moral rectitude.

The duties which relate directly and immediately to GOD are our *first* and *highest* duties. Assured, as we are, of His existence and His glorious perfections,—assured, too, that we are His creatures, dependent upon Him for life, and breath, and all things, encircled continually with His care, and placed under His moral administration,—the slightest reflection will show us, that the relation in which we stand to Him is at once the

most intimate and the most momentous of all that we sustain. He claims the devotion of our heart and the service of all our powers. Our Lord Himself has taught us that the commandment which enjoins supreme and all-pervading love to God is 'the great and first commandment.'

Again, it should ever be borne in mind, that a profound regard to God, embracing all the affections that are suited to His character and the relations in which we stand to Him, will prompt us to *universal rectitude.* It lies at the basis of all moral excellence; and it must, indeed, be blended with all our affections to our fellow-men, and with all our acts of self-control, to constitute them truly virtuous. The harmony of our will with that of God is the highest conception which we can form of a virtuous state of mind; while a course of uniform and unfailing obedience to His commands is the perfection of virtuous conduct. Our whole life should be a period of service to God. It is with eminent propriety that St. Paul, as he passes from the doctrinal to the hortatory portion of his greatest theological Epistle, places self-dedication to God in the very front of our duties, as required by the abounding mercy which the economy of redemption reveals:—'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service' (Rom. xii. 1).

The leading affections which we should cherish towards God, and which are all comprehended in the term 'godliness,' are submission, reverence, trust, and love, together with the hope of dwelling with Him eternally in His heavenly kingdom. Each of these claims special consideration.

1. The principle of *submission* to God is one of wide application. It implies that we yield ourselves up to be ruled by the Divine will,—to accept, without hesitation, every intimation of our duty which God has given to us, and to bow to the arrangements of His providence without murmuring. It must be the constant habit of our minds to be satisfied with the one consideration that God has commanded, in order to obedience;

and we must take our earthly lot, our measure of worldly enjoyment and suffering, as He shall determine. Among the petitions which our Lord has taught us to offer one of the most important is, 'Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.' That petition comprehends many things of deep import; but, among others, it expresses our own submission—our cheerful, unreserved submission—to the will of God, both as defining our duties, and as arranging the circumstances of our being.

2. *Reverence* is another affection which we are to cherish towards God. In His presence we must feel that we are nothing. The contemplation of His glorious perfections should fill us with sacred awe, and lead us to offer to Him our sole and exclusive adoration. We should cherish a fear of offending Him, and shrink back with trembling from every thing that would be opposed to His purity, and cut us off from communion with Him. When justified and renewed through Christ, we are to 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,' knowing that 'it is God that worketh in us both to will and to work, for His good pleasure' (Phil. ii. 12, 13). Our reverence for God must cause us never to utter His name thoughtlessly, or to appeal to Him without a solemn impression of His character and agency. 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain' (Exod. xx. 7). The principle of reverence must chasten all our feelings towards God, and characterise all our worship, while the disclosures of His mercy should encourage us to draw near to Him. 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy' (Psalm cxlvii. 11).

3. The adorable Jehovah is also to be the object of our *trust*. We should rely on His *revealed perfections*, and especially on His wisdom, His goodness, His justice, His holiness, and His fidelity. In many cases we cannot trace the reasons of His appointments or permissions; but even when 'His way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters,' we must rest in the assured conviction. that He will do nothing inconsistent with

His glorious attributes, and that He will be indeed 'a God' to us, while we humbly cleave to Him and do His will. The principle of trust in God must be put forth also in reference to all His *declarations* and *promises*. On these we must rely as true and faithful; looking for the accomplishment of all that He has announced, and the bestowment of all that He has engaged to give. He has, in particular, vouchsafed to us promises of spiritual blessings, to be sought by us in prayer. On these promises we must lay the hand of faith, assured that they shall indeed be fulfilled in our experience. God is honoured by a simple and undoubting faith in His promises; but is dishonoured by unbelief or a careless disregard of His engagements.

4. But the chief affection which we are to cherish towards God is *love*. To this prominence is given in the ancient precept, which our Lord cited as the first commandment;—'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might' (Deut. vi. 4, 5). This love is a complex feeling. It includes *gratitude* to God for His abounding goodness and mercy, especially as revealed in the economy of redemption:—'We love Him because He first loved us.' It includes a settled *esteem* of His glorious character. All the excellences which distinguish that character should call forth our complacency; and we should habitually look up to Him as the Pattern of moral loveliness, and as the Source of all that is pure and good throughout the Universe. And then it includes *delight* in Him. Our reverence and submission are not to be of a chilling and servile character: they are to be blended with a sacred pleasure in approaching God, in meditating on His character and works, and in obeying His will. We should be ready to say with the Psalmist, 'My meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.' Amidst all the attractions and excitements of earth, we should turn to the Eternal Jehovah as the Portion of our spirits, and seek repose and blessedness in the assurance of His favour and in the dedication of our powers to His service.

5. This principle of love to God will cause us to look forward with holy *hope* to an eternal union with Him in the realms of light and glory. Among the privileges immediately consequent upon our justification in Christ, the Apostle Paul mentions the hope of 'the glory of God,'—a hope produced and sustained by the assurance of the Divine love to us imparted by the Holy Ghost, and by the corresponding feeling of love to Him in return. He calls upon us to 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God'; and, having adverted to the designed effect of the discipline of trial on the believing mind, in deepening our Christian experience and thus confirming our hope, he adds, 'And hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us' (Rom. v. 5). One habit of mind which the believer is to cultivate is a decided preference of spiritual and heavenly good to earthly. It was the solemn admonition of our Lord, that we should have our treasure not on earth but in heaven; and He added, 'for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also' (Matt. vi. 19—21). In a similar manner St. Paul calls upon all who are risen with Christ to 'seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God'; and he adds, 'Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth' (Col. iii. 1, 2). We are not, indeed, called upon to banish the love of life, which is a natural and instinctive feeling, or to be eagerly desirous of passing at once from this state of trial and effort to the rest and joy of heaven. The duration of our probationary state, and the circumstances of our removal to a better world, we must leave to God; but still we must look forward to the house of our Father above as our home, and desire to be with Him for ever.

Such are the affections which we are to cherish towards God; and the union of these affections and their practical manifestation in the outward life constitute 'godliness.'

The modes in which these principles will develop themselves are numerous and important.

1. They will prompt us to *the study of Divine truth*, and

cause us to take pleasure in *sacred meditation.* It is instructive to mark the prominence given to these exercises in the devotional poetry of the ancient Church. In the first Psalm it is said of the pious man, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.' This sentiment is reiterated again and again in Psalm cxix., which sets forth, in every variety of phraseology, the excellence of the Divine commandments, and the blessedness of reverently pondering them, and that in order to obedience. The devout mind, consecrated to the service of Jehovah, will ever be anxious to reflect His moral purity; and the truth of God is the appointed instrument of nourishing our spiritual affections. It was the prayer of our Lord, 'Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth' (John xvii. 17); and St. Paul addresses to the Colossians the charge, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom' (iii. 16).

2. The affections which constitute 'godliness' will develop themselves in the habit of *prayer.* The pious mind will draw near to God to adore His perfections, to render thanks for His goodness, to seek the communications of His grace, and to intercede for others. All these exercises are recognised and enjoined in the Divine word. Speaking by the inspired Psalmist, the Most High, after reproving those who thought that they laid Him under an obligation to them by their outward service, thus indicates the character of the worship which He approves: —'Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High; and call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me' (Psalm l. 14, 15). The importance which our Lord assigned to prayer will readily occur to every reader of the evangelical narrative; and His charge as to secret prayer, especially, deserves to be pondered: —'But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and, having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee' (Matt. vi. 6). On one occasion He uttered a parable to enforce the lesson, that we 'ought always to pray, and not to

faint'; and His Apostles, following His guidance, urged this duty as intimately connected with the maintenance of the spiritual life. Thus St. Paul, after describing the Christian armour, adds, 'With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints' (Ephes. vi. 18). To the Philippians He addresses the consolatory exhortation, 'In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God' (iv. 6).

There are two views under which the subject of prayer is presented in the Divine word. One is, that the devout affections of the regenerate mind prompt it to seek communion with God. For that communion our nature has been formed, and in it we realise our true happiness and dignity. And the other view is, that prayer is the appointed channel of blessing. 'Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened' (Matt. vii. 7, 8).

3. A third exercise to which the devout affections of the spiritual mind will prompt it is attendance on *the public worship of God*. The example of our Lord, in the days of His flesh, is, in this respect, full of instruction to us. He was accustomed, during the years of His private life, to attend the synagogue-worship; and throughout His ministry He taught in the synagogues of Galilee and Judæa. So, too, His Apostles mingled in the public worship of the Jews, and gladly embraced the opportunities afforded to them of setting forth to their fellow-countrymen and the devout Gentiles associated with them the claims of the Lord Jesus. After the formation of Christian communities, the members of them met together for prayer, for the reading of the Holy Scriptures, with addresses founded upon them, and for commemorating the Saviour's death and resurrection. And the instincts of the pious mind will lead it to take delight in such exercises. Every godly man will re-echo the sentiment of the Psalmist: 'One thing have I

desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock' (Psalm xxvii. 4, 5).

4. The affections which constitute 'godliness' will lead us to an *open confession* of God. Having come into covenant with Him through Jesus Christ, we shall ever be ready to avow our allegiance to Him and our devotion to the interests of His cause. We shall not be ashamed to confess our faith, even when it would expose us to obloquy and persecution. We shall esteem it our highest honour to be His people, and to be permitted to claim Him as our God.

5. Still further, the affections which we are to cherish towards God will manifest themselves in a constant and uniform *obedience to all His commandments.* Such obedience, as we have seen, is implied in submission to God. If we really bow to Him, and yield ourselves up to serve Him, we shall seek in all things to do His will. And all the other affections of the devout mind will prompt it to obedience and render that obedience delightful. More especially will this be the case with our filial love to God. 'For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous' (1 John v. 3).

6. Finally, 'godliness' will develop itself in *earnest endeavours to lead others to the acknowledgment of God and the experience of His grace.* If we really love Him, we cannot look with indifference upon our fellow-men standing aloof from Him, rebelling against His government, and treating His overtures of mercy with neglect. Our loyalty to Him, as well as our benevolence to our fellow-men, will prompt us to tell of His mercy to the ignorant and wretched, to seek the wandering, and to lead all men to Him in Christ Jesus. From our hearts we shall utter the petitions which our Lord has taught us, 'Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.'

CHAPTER IV.

OUR DUTIES TO OUR FELLOW-MEN GENERALLY.

THE second class of our duties consists of those which we owe to our fellow-men, and which are comprehended under the term 'righteousness,' as combined with, and distinguished from 'godliness.'

We have seen that all our duties correspond to, and indeed arise out of, the *relations* in which we stand. Now there exists an important relation between us and all other men, as members of the common brotherhood of humanity, and still more as interested in the common provisions of redeeming mercy. Thus there are general duties which we owe to *all* men; and then there are special duties arising from the several relations which the constitution of human society involves. It is to the former that our attention must now be directed.

The duties which we owe to mankind in general may be summed up in the three terms, *justice*, *truth*, and *benevolence*.

1. In mentioning *justice*, we do not refer to rectoral or administrative justice, since this belongs to the special relation of magistrates and subjects. We refer, rather, to strict *integrity* in all our dealings with others, and to a sacred regard to all their *rights*, whether those rights respect their persons, their property, or their reputation. The second table of the Decalogue guards several of these rights; for the prohibitions which restrain us shield us also from violence and injury on the part of others. One of them guards the sacredness of human life; another upholds the sanctity of the marriage covenant; another defends the rights of property; and another throws its

shield over personal reputation. Now the very first element in a right state of feeling towards our fellow-men is a settled regard to all their rights, causing us to shrink back from every thing that would invade them, and to take pleasure in observing and maintaining them. It is in this mode that the general principle of love to others will, first of all, manifest itself:—'Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law' (Rom. xiii. 10). In all our transactions with others, we must never take advantage of their ignorance or their necessities; we must never seek our own interests at the sacrifice of the interests of those around us. The Apostolic precept is, 'Look not each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others' (Phil. ii. 4); and our Lord Himself has given us the charge, 'All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also to them; for this is the law and the prophets' (Matt. vii. 12).

2. *Truth*, combined with *fidelity*, is the second leading duty which we owe to all mankind. This principle is to characterise our deportment and conversation. In our intercourse with others we should be simple and sincere. Any attempt to deceive our fellow-men must be regarded as base and dishonourable. We should never seek to convey to their minds a false impression, or to create a delusive expectation. St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, 'Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbour; for we are members one of another' (iv. 25); and to the Colossians, 'Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him' (iii. 9, 10). Our conduct must be marked also by a faithful adherence to our promises and engagements. Such engagements should not be thoughtlessly entered into; but when made they should be carefully observed. In some cases circumstances may have occurred to render the fulfilment of our promises impossible; and this, of course, entirely alters our position and

obligations. Of promises which are in themselves unlawful it is not necessary to speak at length. To make them is itself a sin; and to carry them out only adds to our criminality. It was wrong, for instance, for Herod Antipas to promise the daughter of Herodias to give her whatsoever she would ask, even to the half of his kingdom; but when she asked for the head of John the Baptist, he was bound to refuse, for this involved the commission of murder,—the murder even of one whom Herod himself regarded as good and holy.

3. *Benevolence*, or *kindness*, is the third leading duty which we owe to all men. Our Lord has taught us that, while the command which enjoins supreme love to God is the first and great commandment, the second is, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' The modes in which this principle will develop itself are numerous and varied. Many of them are impressively set forth in the New Testament; and St. Paul, in particular, has illustrated this subject in his beautiful description of *charity*, or *love*, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. To some of these modes we may now advert.

Our benevolence is to manifest itself in *forbearance*. 'Love suffereth long' (1 Cor. xiii. 4). We are charged to 'forbear one another' (Col. iii. 13). 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance' (Gal. v. 22, 23).

Our benevolence is to be evinced in *meekness* and a *readiness to forgive*. This feature of character is again and again enjoined on us. The Saviour Himself has said, 'Resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.' 'Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you' (Matt. v. 39, 44). St. Paul tells us that 'love is not provoked'; and he charges the Ephesians, 'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you' (iv. 31, 32). The principle of benevolence is thus opposed to the anger which involves selfish irritation,

while it admits of that moral displeasure which base and injurious actions should call forth, though this feeling must be guarded and regulated, lest it should become vitiated by selfish passion. 'Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath' (Ephes. iv. 26). Our Lord Himself was the pattern of meekness; and He repeatedly inculcated the forgiveness of injuries, enforcing it by making it a condition of our being ourselves forgiven by God.

Again, Christian benevolence will lead us *to regard the faults and sins of others with unaffected sorrow.* 'Love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth.' That moral displeasure of which we have spoken, as a feeling that should be called forth by base and injurious conduct, must be combined with grief, and with a sincere desire to lead the offenders to repentance. This state of feeling will guard us against that vice which Holy Scripture condemns as 'evil-speaking.' It is not right for us to make the faults of others topics of conversation, when there is no call of duty to mention them, and still less to speak of them with a secret satisfaction and self-complacency arising from the feeling of personal superiority. The mind that is under the controlling influence of Christian love will carefully avoid this, and will, indeed, pursue an opposite line of conduct. That love prompts us to think favourably of all others,—to put the best construction on actions that truth will admit,—to hope for the amendment of offenders,—and to cover the faults of others when it is not necessary, in the interests of truth and righteousness, or for the protection of others, to advert to them.

Still further, benevolence will develop itself in *a superiority to envious feeling.* 'Love envieth not.' Accustomed to regard the interests and happiness of others as well as our own, we shall not repine at their prosperity or at the distinctions which they may attain. While ourselves intent on attaining excellence and deserving success, we shall not be grieved if others rise above us, remembering that our respective powers and opportunities are given to us by our Father in heaven, and that

this life is one of training for a higher and eternal state. This last consideration may well reconcile us to many things in our outward condition in which it might otherwise be difficult for us to acquiesce.

Again, Christian benevolence will manifest itself in *sympathy with the afflicted and distressed*, and in *active efforts to relieve their sufferings*. The charge of St. Paul is, 'Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep' (Rom. xii. 15). Kindness to the poor and sorrowful, and the mitigation of their distresses, are duties again and again enforced by our Lord Himself, and to which a special blessing is promised. 'When thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just' (Luke xiv. 13, 15). In His description of the last judgment, our Lord gave prominence to kindness to His afflicted and persecuted people, as the natural development and proof of devotedness to Himself (Matt. xxv. 34—40). The Apostles inculcate the same duties. St. Paul, describing his intercourse with the leading Apostles at Jerusalem, and the interchange of views between them, beautifully says, 'Only they would that we should remember the poor, which very thing I was also zealous to do' (Gal. ii. 10). And St. John writes, 'Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?' (1 John iii. 16, 17.)

There is yet another mode in which Christian benevolence will put forth its power. It will prompt us to *earnest and sustained efforts to lead others to Christ*, and to promote, in every way, *their spiritual interests*. We are called upon to breathe the spirit, and to tread in the footsteps, of our Lord, who declared His mission on earth to be, 'to seek and to save that which was lost,' and who rejoiced over those who were brought to repentance, and who came to Him for salvation

and blessing. We should seek to diffuse the light of Christian truth around those who now sit in darkness, and to lead every wanderer back to God. And if a Christian brother has fallen into sin,—has been actually surprised in it, so that his guilt is incontestable,—while we should manifest displeasure at his conduct, we should seek his recovery. Such is the charge of St. Paul:—'Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, looking to thyself lest thou also be tempted' (Gal. vi. 1).

CHAPTER V.

DUTIES ARISING FROM THE SPECIAL RELATIONS OF HUMAN SOCIETY.

IN addition to the duties which we owe to all men, there are particular duties required by the special relations which the constitution of human society involves. There are the duties, for instance, of parents and children, of husbands and wives, of masters and servants, and of magistrates and subjects. These are stated and enforced in Holy Scripture; while the great facts of Christianity supply additional motives to the careful observance of them.

1. Our attention must first be directed to the duties arising from the *parental* and *filial relation*.

The duties of *children* towards their parents are so important that they have place in the legislation of Sinai. The fifth commandment is, 'Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' This commandment was quoted by our Lord, when He charged the Pharisees and scribes with making void the word of God by their tradition; and He pointed out one important application of it which that tradition had set aside (Matt. xv. 3—6). St. Paul, too, cites this commandment and enlarges upon it in his Epistle to the Ephesians:—'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth' (vi. 1—3).

The charge that children should '*honour*' their father and

mother is very comprehensive. It requires them to obey the lawful commands of their parents, and to treat them with the marked respect and affection which the parental relation should, under all circumstances, call forth, and which are pre-eminently due when children have been affectionately watched over and trained. It requires children, also, as our Lord's argument with the Pharisees implies, to afford temporal support to their parents in advanced age, if they should need assistance, and to soothe them under the infirmities of advancing years. The parental and filial relation is one which only death can dissolve; and there are duties corresponding to it which extend through its whole duration. The requirement of obedience to parental authority, indeed, which was binding upon us when, in childhood and youth, we dwelt beneath the parental roof, is modified by the demands of other relations in the period of mature manhood: but throughout life parents are to be treated with marked respect and honour, and their wishes should, as far as possible, be complied with. And it will afford to every noble mind a rich satisfaction to be able to gladden the declining days of a parent by marks of filial affection and esteem.

The duties of *parents* towards their children are correlative to those of children towards their parents. They are to provide for them during the years of childhood,—to watch over the formation of their character, guarding them, as far as possible, from injurious influences,—to train their intellectual powers, imparting to them or obtaining for them, suitable instruction combined with mental discipline, and to rule them with kind consideration and yet with firmness. 'And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord' (Ephes. vi. 4). This last expression gives prominence to one feature of parental duty under the Christian economy. The whole course of instruction, and training, and discipline, to which children are subjected, should be regulated by a regard to the authority of Christ, and be directed to the result, that they should stand forth, even in

early youth, to confess His name, and to make their earthly life a period of service to Him.

2. The duties which belong to the *conjugal relation* come next in order.

Marriage is an institution of God, the sanctity of which was guarded by the solemn command delivered on Sinai, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' The liberty of divorce allowed, on certain grounds, to the ancient people of God, has been restricted by our Lord to one particular case. 'It was said also, Whosoever shall put away His wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery' (Matt. v. 31, 32).

The institution of marriage lies at the basis of the Christian family, and is designed to exert an elevating influence on the human character. According to the Divine ideal, it is the union of two individuals so that henceforth they shall be one, their interests being inseparable, and their joys and sorrows the same. The duties which result from it correspond to this lofty ideal; and, under the Christian economy, they derive a peculiar character from the fact, that this relation has been chosen to represent the union of Christ and His Church. *Husbands* are to love their wives, 'even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.' 'Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth His own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the Church; because we are members of His body' (Ephes. v. 25, 28—30). The relation in which husbands stand to their wives imposes on them the duty of *guardianship* and *tender care*, —a care which shall evince the constant operation of *a self-sacrificing* love, combined with the consciousness of a right to direct. The charge of St. Peter to husbands calls upon them to treat their wives with honour, affectionately remembering on the one hand the greater weakness of the sex, and, on the other,

their equal participation in the lofty privileges of the Christian salvation (1 Peter iii. 7).

The relation of wives to their husbands requires not only a special *love* and *devotion to their interests* but also *submission* and *reverence*. St. Paul has enforced these duties in Ephes. v. 22—24, 33; Col. iii. 18; and St. Peter in his first Epistle, iii. 1, 2; v. 6. But the character of this subjection must not be misunderstood. The submission of a wife is not that of a servant. It is a submission prompted by tender affection as well as profound respect,—the submission of one who feels that she may claim an interest in all that her husband is and has, but who yields her judgment to his, and who has given herself up to him to promote his happiness, assured that he can have no interest separate from hers.

3. We have now to consider the duties arising from the relation of *masters* and *servants*. These are repeatedly enforced in the Apostolic writings.

With regard to the duties of *masters*, St. Paul, after inculcating on servants a cheerful and hearty obedience, prompted by Christian principle, adds, 'And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening; knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with Him' (Ephes. vi. 9). To the Colossians he writes, 'Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven' (iv. 1). In these exhortations, which apply not only to the state of society in which St. Paul wrote, but to the relation of masters and servants of every age, he enjoins on masters kind consideration for their servants, and the rendering to them of a just recompense for their services. All harsh and ungenerous treatment is to be avoided, as utterly inconsistent with the relation with subsists between them as fellow-men, and as being equally the subjects of the Divine government. There is something beautiful and impressive in the manner in which St. Paul reminds masters that they and their servants have a common Master in heaven, to whom they are all responsible,

and whose judicial decisions will be characterised by the strictest impartiality. The time is coming when all the adventitious distinctions of earth will cease, and every man, whatever may have been his position here, will receive his own recompense according to his character and conduct.

The manner in which the duties of *servants* are spoken of beautifully illustrates the character and spirit of Christianity. St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, 'Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free' (vi. 5—8). Similar injunctions are found in Col. iii. 22—25; Titus ii. 9, 10; 1 Peter ii. 18—20. These exhortations were primarily addressed, for the most part, to slaves; but the general principles which they embody apply to servants under a different and happier constitution of society. Servants are to treat their masters with respect and reverence, and to shrink back from that which would be offensive to them; they are to consult the interests of their masters, not only abstaining from taking that which belongs to them, but serving them in their absence with the same zeal and fidelity which they would show if they were present; and even if occasionally subject to unkind treatment, to bear with it rather than resent it. Such a course of conduct is enforced by the peculiar considerations which our relation to Christ supplies. If we have embraced the Lord Jesus, and have become His people, our whole course on earth, however humble the position which we may occupy, and however menial the engagements to which we may be called, forms a course of service to Him; and He will accept it, and will reward us for whatever we have done or suffered in order to please Him. How must this consideration have lightened the burden of sorrow and suffering which

often pressed upon the hearts of slaves in the ancient world; and how does it, even now, ennoble many of the exercises which might otherwise be considered unworthy of our nature!

4. Christianity enforces also the respective duties of *magistrates* and *subjects*. It recognises civil government as an ordinance of God, essential to the order and welfare of human society; and it places all the obligations which it involves in the light of this great principle.

On this subject we should never overlook our Lord's own comprehensive saying, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's' (Matt. xxii. 21). Thus He teaches us that there is an allegiance which the human spirit owes directly to God, with which the civil magistrate has no right to interfere; but He teaches us also, that there is an allegiance which is due to the government under which we live. St. Peter enforces the duty of obedience to civil rulers in the following terms:—'Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well' (1 Peter ii. 13, 14). St. Paul has enlarged on this subject in Rom. xiii. 1—7; and it is instructive to trace the principles which he affirms.

First of all, he declares that 'there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God.' The former of these assertions implies that the authority which belongs to any man, or indeed to any creature, in virtue of any relation which he may sustain, is derived from HIM who has constituted these relations. The particular application of this general principle to the case in question is, that civil government is an ordinance of God, since it is a part of the Divine plan that men should live together in *society*, under the control of *laws* which magistrates should administer, and the penalties of which magistrates should enforce. And the Apostle goes beyond this. Adverting to existing civil authorities, he affirms that they 'are ordered of God,'—they have place in the arrangements of His provi-

dence. He does not claim Divine right for any particular form of civil government, as distinguished from others; but reminds us that the existing form of government in any country has been established under the permission, at least, of Divine Providence, so that it is the duty of Christians to yield obedience to the ruling power.

Resting on these principles, the Apostle enforces on *magistrates* the just and firm exercise of the *authority* with which they are invested. They are to be 'a terror' to evil men, while they are to protect and encourage those who do good' (vers. 3, 4). It is the design of God that magistrates should throw a shield over the innocent and deserving, and guard them from lawless violence. And to enable them to do so, they are to be armed with power to punish the wrong-doer. The remarkable words, 'He beareth not the sword in vain,' imply that the sovereign authority may even take away life in those cases in which the law of God requires it; while they imply also, that the magistrate is *bound* to guard the rights of the innocent, by the actual infliction of appropriate punishment on the wrong-doer, and that to omit to do so would be unfaithfulness to his sacred trust.

On the same principle, that civil government is an ordinance of God, St. Paul enjoins on *subjects* the general duty of *submission* to constituted authority, as a matter of conscience, and the particular duty of the payment of *tribute*. Magistrates, also, are to be held in honour for the sake of their office. 'Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For this cause ye pay tribute also: for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour' (vers. 5—7). Here it is instructive to mark how the principles of Christianity elevate all the ordinary duties of life. Even the payment of tribute is connected with a recognition of God, and derives from such a recognition increased importance.

And it is instructive also to mark the wide range of the last charge of the Apostle:—'honour to whom honour.' He calls upon us to treat with deference and respect those who, in the providence of God, are placed in the higher and more influential positions of human society. The thoughtful Christian will, indeed, 'honour all men'; he will treat even the humblest and poorest with respect, recognising the high value of our common human nature; but he will also recognise, in his whole deportment, the claims of the higher relations and offices of human life,—thus acknowledging HIM who has constituted these relations, and who watches over the varied interests of human society.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR DUTIES TO OURSELVES.

IN addition to the duties which relate immediately to God, and those which we owe to our fellow-men, there is a third class which respects ourselves, involving the due regulation and control of the appetites, desires, affections, and powers of our complex nature. These are all comprised in the Scriptural term 'sobriety'; and they form an important branch of that moral excellence after which we should strive.

It must not, however, be imagined that these duties affect ourselves *only*, so that if they are neglected or violated we ourselves are the only persons injured. The observance of them is one part of our duty to God; and if we disregard them we do Him wrong. He has formed us with certain powers of body and mind, the proper regulation and government of which are necessary to secure the end of our existence; and if we enfeeble or pollute ourselves by violations of sobriety, we cannot cherish devotion towards Him, or give to Him the energies of our minds. We frustrate, as far as in us lies, His purpose in giving us being. So, too, the maintenance of sobriety is essential to the right discharge of our duties towards our fellow-men. If we do not properly govern our appetites and desires, we shall invade the rights, and injure the happiness, of others, and diffuse misery in every relation in which we stand. Some of the most atrocious crimes that darken the records of human society have been committed under the influence of drunken excitement; and unchecked passion has, in many instances, hurried on individuals to acts of violence, the remembrance of

which, if any sensibility is left, must embitter the whole remainder of life.

The term 'sobriety,' as it is used in the New Testament, denotes *universal self-government*. It may be properly distributed into two branches.

1. It implies *the due regulation and control of the appetites of the body*. These are to be strictly confined within the positive limits which the Divine law has marked out; and even the lawful and permitted indulgence of them is to be characterised by moderation. Sense is never to be gratified so as to enfeeble the mind, or unfit us for our varied duties.

One of the most glaring and fearful violations of this branch of duty is that which is popularly termed *intemperance*. Against this we have frequent warnings in the New Testament. 'Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit' (Ephes. v. 18). 'They that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet the hope of salvation' (1 Thess. v. 7, 8). But in addition to the passages in which this vice is specially denounced, there are others in which it is placed in combination with other violations of sobriety, and in which all these are represented as 'the unfruitful works of darkness,'—works which shun, or ought to shun, the light, and which yield no return of satisfaction or peace, but on the contrary induce suffering and anguish. It will suffice to refer to the charge of St. Paul to the Christians at Rome:—'The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof' (xiii. 12—14).

2. Christian sobriety implies *the proper government of the desires, affections, and powers of the mind*. Several particulars

comprehended under this general statement require special notice.

(1) Every Christian is bound to cultivate the strictest *chastity* of thought and feeling. The imagination is not to be occupied with foolish, dissipating, licentious thoughts, but rather with images of purity and moral goodness. Our Lord Himself affirmed, in His Sermon on the Mount, that the command delivered on Sinai, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' forbids all licentious desires, and He enforced the truth, that the cherished desire of any sinful indulgence involves, in the sight of God, the guilt of that indulgence, and must expose us to its penalty (Matt. v. 27, 28). Nor did He pause here. By two remarkable figures,—the plucking out of the right eye, and the cutting off of the right hand,—He called upon His people to turn away at once, and with a fixed and decided purpose, from that which would allure them to sin,—to sacrifice that which might be allowable in itself, if it became to them the occasion of stumbling,—and to submit to any self-denial rather than sin against God and ruin their own souls.

(2) The Christian is called upon to guard against the intrusion of *pride*, and to 'gird himself with *humility*.' Pride, when viewed in its aspect towards God, appears base and wicked. The proud man practically forgets, if he does not even renounce, his dependence upon God. He glories in his own supposed excellences as if they were altogether his own, as if there were no Higher Power to which he is subjected, and from which whatever good he possesses has been derived. The feeling of pride, too, tends to corrupt the views of the man who indulges it on moral subjects, by making himself, to a great extent, the standard of excellence. And this feeling often exerts a most injurious influence on those who come within the circle in which the proud man moves. It tends to destroy domestic comfort, and is the prolific source of strife and misery in human society. But every Christian seeks to banish it from his heart, and then to watch against its insidious approaches. He will habitually remember his entire dependence

on God, and acknowledge that he has nothing which he has not received;—he will remember, too, that whatever he has of holy principle has been imparted to him under an economy of grace, and is sustained by the constant operation of a Divine power within him;—he will feel that in the presence of the infinite and unsullied excellence of God, he himself is even as nothing;—and, as he thinks of his fellow-men, he will be ready to acknowledge their gifts and virtues, while he will ever form a moderate estimate of his own powers and worth.

(3) The Christian is charged to guard against *covetousness*,—the desire of accumulating earthly treasure,—and to act uniformly and faithfully on the principle of his stewardship to God. This is a prominent and characteristic feature of Christian morals. The Saviour Himself repeatedly enforced it. In His Sermon on the Mount He said, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. . . No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon' (Matt. vi. 19—21; 24). In His parable of the unjust steward, designed to show that we should exercise forethought in reference to the issue of our probation, but that that forethought should be such as becomes 'the children of light,' He distinctly recognises the principle of our stewardship to God in regard to worldly property, and teaches us that the refusal of some men to act upon it is the true reason why they never attain the true riches of inward peace and purity,—those riches of which no earthly change can deprive us. 'If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?' (Luke xvi. 11, 12.) It is not implied in the teaching of Christianity

on this subject, that we should be destitute of interest in our secular pursuits; on the contrary, we are to be diligent and earnest in whatever we have to do; but it is implied that we are not to love money,—that if God has blessed us with abundance, we should use it for His glory and for the benefit of our fellow-men,—that if such abundance is denied us, we should cherish contentment with our lot,—and that our chief affections are to be placed on that which is spiritual and heavenly. The Apostle Paul warns us, 'They that desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows' (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10). In a similar manner the writer to the Hebrews says, 'Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee' (xiii. 5).

(4) Christian sobriety includes *patience* under sufferings and afflictions. This life is a period of training and discipline for a higher and eternal state; and if we bow to the will of God, seeking grace and strength from Him to endure our trials, they will be rendered conducive to our highest welfare. The 'chastening' of our Heavenly Father is intended 'for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness'; and although that chastening, during its continuance, is 'not joyous but grievous, yet afterwards it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness' (Heb. xii. 10, 11). It is one office of the Holy Ghost, as the Comforter, to impart special succour and consolation to the afflicted people of God; and the fulness of His gracious influence has often enabled the sufferer to say with the Apostle Paul, 'Tribulation worketh patience, and patience probation, and probation hope; and hope putteth not to shame, because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us' (Rom. v. 3—5).

(5) Still further, the proper regulation of our affections and desires implies that we maintain an attitude of *readiness for spiritual exercises and conflicts.* We are never to forget that we are still exposed to danger and still liable to fall, until our probationary course is terminated by the summons of our Lord. We move in the midst of adverse influences, and we ourselves are in danger of sinking down into a state of spiritual inactivity and sloth. Against these perils we are to guard, preserving a wakeful attitude, cherishing the spirit of prayer, and having on 'the armour of light.' The charge of our Lord, as He was drawing near to the close of His ministry, was, 'What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch' (Mark. xiii. 37). This charge the Apostle Peter re-echoes:—'But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer.' 'Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom withstand, steadfast in the faith' (1 Peter. iv. 7; v. 8).

(6) Finally, the law of Christ requires us to renounce *living to ourselves,* and to *give ourselves up to Him* to do His will, and to seek His glory. He has bought us with His blood, and claims us as His 'purchased possession.' Our natural self-love, in its vitiated and corrupt form, would prompt us to make our own ease, or our own wealth, or our own glory, the object of life. But this tendency is to be sternly repressed, and the principle of unreserved self-dedication to Christ is to be steadfastly maintained. This, indeed, is essential to the Christian character. 'For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's' (Rom. xiv. 7, 8). 'For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again' (2 Cor. v. 14, 15).

CHAPTER VII.

PECULIAR FEATURES OF THE MORAL SYSTEM OF CHRISTIANITY.

IN the views which we have already taken of our duties to God, to our fellow-men, and to ourselves, as they are enjoined in the Christian revelation, we have necessarily adverted to several considerations suggested by the economy of grace under which we are now placed. But the relation of that economy to the whole system of duty, and to the elements of character that constitute moral excellence is so important as to deserve separate attention. There are several distinguishing features of Christian ethics which claim our regard.

1. The first great peculiarity of the Christian scheme of morals is, that it recognises *a new inward life*, imparted by the Spirit of Christ, as that which only can enable us to fulfil all our duties, and which only can invest our character with moral loveliness.

The gift of the Spirit is the grand provision which has been made for our rescue from the thraldom of unholy passions, and our entrance upon, and continuance in, a course of obedience to the Divine law. Until Christ is embraced by faith, and the Spirit of Christ takes possession of the heart, the efforts of an enlightened judgment and conscience to observe that which is right, and pure, and good, often end in failure, being overcome by the strength of sinful tendencies. Had Christianity, then, merely unfolded the law of God in its amplitude and spirituality, it would have left us struggling in vain against the power of evil. But the living energy of the Spirit, bestowed through the mediatorial work of Christ, meets our case. Upon our being united to the Saviour by faith, our state of spiritual bondage is terminated. Instead of being left to exclaim, 'O

wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?' we can now gratefully declare, 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Rom. viii. 2—4).

2. A second leading consideration affecting the Christian scheme of morals is, that many of our duties are *modified*, and *new duties* devolve upon us, as the result of our Lord's mediatorial work.

The *worship* which we offer to God, for instance, must now be offered through the adorable Mediator. 'I am the way,' said Jesus, 'the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by Me.' Our thanksgivings, our petitions, our intercessions, are all to be presented in the name of the Lord Jesus. 'Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him' (Col. iii. 17). 'Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name' (Heb. xiii. 15). Communion with God is at once the privilege and the duty of all Christ's people; and that communion is to be maintained through the Lord Jesus, while it is the indwelling of the Spirit that prompts and sustains it. Referring to the association of Jews and Gentiles in common spiritual privileges in Christ, the Apostle Paul declares, 'Through Him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father' (Ephes. ii. 18).

Again, *love to Christ* is now a primary duty of all His people. He demands an attachment which shall transcend the strongest and purest affections called forth by the relations of earth,—a devotion which shall lead us to endure the greatest privations and sufferings, rather than renounce our fidelity to Him (Matt. x. 37, 38). We have seen that the Lord Jesus claims us as His 'purchased possession'; and that all who obtain

spiritual life through Him are bound to devote themselves to Him without reserve. Self-dedication to Christ, based upon the great facts of His redeeming work, is the grand characteristic of all who are truly His.

Still further, our *feelings* and *conduct* towards the *guilty* and *impenitent* should be affected by the great facts of the economy of redemption. It is right, indeed, that base and injurious conduct should call forth within us a feeling of moral displeasure; but that feeling should be chastened by the recollection of our own past sins, and of the mercy which was shown to us, as well as by a pitying solicitude to lead the offenders to the Saviour. We are called upon to be 'gentle, showing all meekness unto all men'; and this charge is enforced by the consideration, 'For we also were aforetime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, hateful, hating one another: but when the kindness of God our Saviour, and His love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost' (Titus. iii. 2—5).

Another duty directly results from the arrangements of the mediatorial scheme. We are charged to love *our brethren in Christ* with *a special and peculiar love*,—a love of spiritual sympathy and attachment. The 'new commandment' of our Lord is, that we should love one another even as He loved His disciples while on earth, and as He loves His people still, now that He has passed to His heavenly glory. The precept of universal benevolence had been in force from the beginning; but the command of the Saviour points to a special attachment, resulting from a common union with Himself and the common participation of His Spirit. 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another' (John xiii. 34, 35). Now the love of Christ to His people had two distinguishing characteristics. It fixed upon them as *His own*, those

whom He designed to bring into an ineffable union with Himself and the Eternal Father (John xvii. 20—24). That love, too, was *self-sacrificing;* and such must be our love to our brethren in Christ. 'Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren' (1 John iii. 16).

3. A third leading consideration is, that the Christian revelation has modified, to some extent, *our conception of moral excellence.*

We have seen that the character of God is the archetype and pattern of that which is pure and good: but that character is now presented to us far more clearly and impressively than it was under former dispensations. In the Incarnate Son we have the revelation of the Father, especially in the commingling glories of His holiness and love (John i. 18; xiv. 8, 9). In contemplating the character of God, therefore, as that to which we should seek to be conformed, we are to view it as it appears in the Person, and life, and work of the adorable Mediator. In Him the glories of the Godhead are softened and attempered to our gaze by being blended with human virtues. And the virtues which were prominent in His character are those which do not call forth the enthusiasm of the world. While that character presented an intense regard to holiness, and a stern hostility to sin,—especially when seeking to disguise itself under the appearance of sanctity,—it presented especially gentleness, condescension, and sympathy. Kindness to the poor and afflicted ever marked His career; and the forgiveness of injuries was not only inculcated by Him but was illustrated by His own example. The milder graces were consecrated and ennobled by His whole bearing and life; and especially the duty of self-sacrificing love had its highest exemplification in His own submission to suffering and death, in order to redeem and save us. We cannot steadfastly contemplate the character of our Lord, without having a loftier and more perfect ideal of moral excellence than we could otherwise have attained; and to have 'that mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus,' and 'to walk as He

also walked,' are the highest attainments to which we can aspire.

4. There is a fourth leading consideration, affecting the moral system of Christianity, which merits our attention. It reveals to us that which constitutes the *highest good* of our nature; and while all its precepts have the highest reason, even if the relations and interests of earth were alone regarded, they are directed to a grander result than our present happiness, or the present welfare of those around us,—even our eternal fellowship with God in the realms of light.

It is admitted that the science of morals comprehends the consideration of the highest good of man. This, indeed, is very different from the theory which some have advanced, that utility is the proper foundation of morals,—that an action is to be regarded as right because it tends to promote the real and permanent welfare either of an individual, or of mankind at large. To the utilitarian theory of morals there are grave objections. While it is certain that all right actions do ultimately tend to the welfare both of individuals and of the race, it must be contended that certain principles and actions are right *in themselves*, as adapted to, and required by, the *relations* in which we stand to God and our fellow-creatures. But there is that in our nature which prompts us to seek happiness; and a comprehensive view of duty and moral excellence will naturally lead us onward to inquire into that in which our nature is to find its perfection and blessedness. On this Christianity sheds a clear and attractive light. The human spirit, united to Christ by faith, and pervaded by the new life which the Holy Ghost imparts, is more and more assimilated to the character of its Lord; and thus it finds its repose and satisfaction in the consciousness of the Divine favour, and in the harmony of its principles and feelings with the Divine will. And when the people of Christ are at last gathered around Him, and are fully conformed to His image, so that He stands as 'the Firstborn among many brethren,' then will humanity appear in its perfection of moral loveliness, and in the possession of the deep, calm joy for which it has been formed.

PART V.

THE INSTITUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.



CHAPTER I.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

AMONG the Institutions of Christianity we may first consider that which embodies its essential principles, its worship, and its order, and which presents all these to the view of the world,—the Christian Church. It was the plan of the Lord Jesus to establish among men a spiritual Kingdom, the subjects of which, while they surrendered themselves unreservedly to His rule, should reflect His purity and love, should openly confess Him before men, and should seek to bring all men to the acknowledgment of His authority and the experience of His salvation. 'He went forth,' it has been properly said, 'not to found a local school of evanescent sentiment, but to proclaim an enduring and world-wide Kingdom of Souls, based upon the culture of a common moral character, and upon intellectual submission to a common creed.'*

In entering upon the subject of the Church of Christ, it is important for us to remember that the Church is often spoken of in Scripture as comprehending all Christ's spiritual people, whether in heaven or on earth. 'That Church of Christ,' says Hooker, 'which we properly term His body mystical can be but one; neither can that one be sensibly discerned by any man, inasmuch as the parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their natural persons be visible) we do not discern under this property whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. Only our minds by intellectual conceit are able to apprehend that such a

* Canon Liddon's 'Bampton Lectures,' Lect. III., p. 167, first edition.

body there is, a body collective, because it containeth a huge multitude; a body mystical, because the mystery of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense. Whatsoever we read in Scripture concerning the endless love and saving mercy which God showeth towards His Church, the only proper subject thereof is this Church. Concerning this flock it is, that our Lord and Saviour hath promised, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." They who are of this Society have such marks and notes of distinction from all others, as are not objects unto our sense; only unto God who seeth their hearts and understandeth all their secret cogitations, unto Him they are clear and manifest. All men knew Nathanael to be an Israelite. But our Saviour, piercing deeper, giveth further testimony of him than men could have done with such certainty as He did, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." '*

But it is of the Church as it exists on earth—the visible Church—that we have now to speak. That Church, in its several branches, comprehends all who hold the essential truths of Christianity, who accept the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, and who openly profess, according to His plan, their subjection to His authority, their trust in His atonement, and their devotion to His service.

The Church of God, indeed, existed in former ages; and that Church is, in an important sense, *one* under every dispensation. The argument of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, clearly implies this. Expostulating with the Gentile believers, he compares the Church of God to a beautiful and fruitful olive-tree, whose root was to be sought in the patriarchal age; and he affirms that the Gentile Christians, though by nature belonging to a different stock, had been grafted into this tree among some of the natural branches which remained; that although many of these last had been broken off, this was on account of their unbelief; and that the excision of these was

* 'Ecclesiastical Polity,' Book III, s. 1.

not final, for if they continued not in unbelief God would 'graft them in again' (xi. 17—24).

But now the Church is emphatically the Church of Christ. He Himself spoke of it as *His Church* which He was about to establish, and which He would build upon the immovable foundation of His personal claims. Referring to the confession of Peter, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' He affirmed, 'Upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it' (Matt. xvi. 18). His personal ministry formed a preparation for the establishment of His Church; and when He was about to ascend to His heavenly glory, He made provision for its being set up by the promise of the Spirit, and by the commission which He gave to His Apostles to 'make disciples of all the nations,' baptizing them in the name of the Holy Trinity, and teaching them to observe all things that He had commanded.

The constitution of the Church of God, under the new dispensation is, in several important respects, different from its constitution in former periods. Under the Mosaic economy the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh, when they had received the covenant-rite of circumcision, were recognised as the people of God; and with them were associated devout Gentiles, upon their submitting to circumcision, and engaging to observe the law. But under the Christian dispensation Jews and Gentiles are placed on the same ground; the ritual law is abolished; and the only conditions of membership in the Church, on the part of adults, are submission to the authority of the Lord Jesus, an exclusive reliance on His work and sacrifice, and the open confession of Him before the world. All who really love Him, and cling to Him as their Saviour, and give themselves up to His service, and who have been baptized in His name, are members of His true, spiritual Church, at the same time that they belong to the outward fellowship of His people. These sentiments are again and again affirmed in the Apostolic writings. St. Paul, in particular, addressing the Galatians, says, 'In Christ Jesus

neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love' (v. 6); and in a subsequent passage he enlarges on this sentiment, and shows us who are the true 'Israel of God':—'But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For neither is circumcision any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God' (vi. 14—16). In his Epistle to the Philippians, also, after stigmatising those who prided themselves on the outward rite of circumcision as 'the concision,' he adds, 'For we are the circumcision,'—the true Israel, the true covenant-people of God,—'who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh' (iii. 3).

Of the universal Church the Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the Head. This, as we have seen, is one of the glories which belong to Him as the enthroned Mediator. He possesses supreme authority over it; He fills it with spiritual life; and He identifies Himself with it in all its interests. But this subject has been dwelt upon in the Chapter which refers to the Mediator in His state of exaltation.

The Church of Christ, as a visible Institution, must rest on *a doctrinal basis*. There are certain great and fundamental truths of Christianity, which cannot be set aside without entirely changing its character, and the denial of which is inconsistent with loyalty to the Lord Jesus. So strongly did the Apostle Paul feel this, that in remonstrating with the Galatians, who had been led astray by Judaizing teachers, he affirmed that they were 'removing from Him that called them in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel'; and he added impressively, 'which is not another; only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema' (i. 6—8). We may properly appeal to the

baptismal formula, used, according to our Lord's appointment, in the formal admission of persons to discipleship to Himself, and to His words in the institution of that other sacrament in which His people are to continue to avow their faith in Him, as showing that there are certain essential principles, which every Society that claims to be a branch of the Christian Church must recognise and maintain. The Redeemer's commission to His Apostles was, 'All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth, Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. xxviii. 18—20). All, therefore, who come forward to be thus admitted to His Church do, by that act, avow their faith in the Triune God, and, in particular, acknowledge the Lord Jesus as the Son, and as the enthroned Mediator, all whose precepts are binding upon the consciences of His people. In instituting the sacrament of His supper, the Lord Jesus said, as He handed the bread to His disciples. 'Take, eat, this is My body, which is broken for you'; and as He gave them the cup, He said, 'Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins.' Now, by appointing this sacrament, and uttering these words of institution, our Lord has taught us that all the members of His Church are to regard His death as vicarious and sacrificial,—as having an important relation to 'the remission of sins,'—and as that through which they rise to the privileges of 'the new covenant.' Nay, more, the very act of eating that bread and drinking that cup is symbolical of an appropriation of His sacrifice, and implies, at least, that we turn away from every other refuge, and look to the crucified Redeemer alone for salvation, even if we have not yet obtained joy and peace in Him. We cannot, then, allow as valid the claim of any professed Christian Society to be a branch of the Church of Christ, which refuses to recognise the Triune Name, and which

does not acknowledge the Lord Jesus as the Incarnate Son, who has redeemed us by dying in our stead, and who is now invested with supreme authority.

It is important to remember that the Church exists for certain great purposes, and that this fact imposes on its members corresponding duties.

1. The first of the purposes referred to is *the conservation of the truth of Christ*, and *the holding forth of that truth to the world.* To the Church of Christ, as to the Jewish Church of old, are entrusted 'the oracles of God' (Rom. iii. 2). What a confirmation of our faith is derived from the fact, that the Scriptures of the New Testament, as we now have them, have been read in Christian assemblies from the very first, and have been appealed to as authoritative by a succession of Christian writers, reaching from the Apostles' days to the present time! And how deep an interest attaches to the fact, that the fundamental truths recognised, as we have seen, in the baptismal formula, and in the words of the institution of the eucharist, have been proclaimed in the Church, in the administration of these sacraments, from age to age!

2. A second object for which the Church of Christ exists is *the building up of its members in faith and holiness.* This is one great result to which the pastoral ministration of the truth is to be subservient. The Lord Jesus has given some to be 'pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (Ephes. iv. 11—13). But it is not by this instrumentality only that the character of Christ's disciples is to be matured, and their spiritual oneness promoted. They are to 'edify one another in love.' By mutual exhortation, and union in holy exercises, they are to grow in grace and be more and more assimilated to their Lord and Head. Thus St. Paul adds to the words which we have cited, 'that we may be no longer children, tossed to and

fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love' (vers. 14—16). Thus, too, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, after exhorting believers to maintain intimate communion with God through Christ, and to 'hold fast the confession of their hope' without wavering, adds, 'And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day drawing nigh' (x. 24, 25).

3. A third purpose for which the Church of Christ exists is the exhibition to the world of the *true character and spirit of Christianity* by the manifestation of that *brotherly love* which our Lord has specially enjoined on His people. In their whole deportment, indeed, Christians are to evince the purity and love which adorned the character of their Master. But the practical manifestation of their brotherly love is to be the grand evidence of their discipleship to Him. 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another' (John xiii. 35). And the intercourse of the Church, and still more the intercommunion of different branches of the visible Church, affords opportunities for the manifestation of this love. Such intercommunion, marked by sincere and heartfelt affection, will eminently contribute to the universal acknowledgment of the Redeemer's claims (John xvii. 20—23).

4. Still further, another object for which the Church of Christ exists is *the recovery of the world to its allegiance to God.* The commission given to the Apostles to preach the Gospel everywhere, and to make disciples of all the nations extends to all Christ's ministers in every age. But while this commission is specially binding on the ministers of Christ, it implies a duty

devolving on the members of the Church generally. They are to send forth the ambassadors of the Saviour to heathen lands, —to sustain them in their efforts to plant Christian Churches, —and to cheer them by their sympathy and their prayers. So, also, they are to help forward, and as opportunity is afforded to engage in, evangelistic work among the ignorant and unconverted around them. And their association in the Church will tend to give unity to these efforts and to render them more effective.

It will be evident that, in order to its fulfilling the high purposes for which it exists, a *godly discipline* must be maintained in the Church of Christ. For the exercise of that discipline Christian pastors are specially responsible to their Lord. Open and obstinate offenders against the laws of Christ are to be put away from the fellowship of the faithful. It is no part of the duty of those who watch over the Church, to deal, in the way of discipline, with sins of the heart which do not manifest themselves in overt acts. In the parable of the wheat and the tares, our Lord represents the servants of the householder as asking him, in reference to the tares, 'Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?' and the reply was, 'Nay, lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them.' But open and glaring sin must not be allowed in the fold of Christ. St. Paul's directions to the Corinthians respecting the incestuous person sufficiently evince this; and his charge to Titus to 'reject, after a first and second admonition,' a factious man, one who promotes strife and division in the Church, confirms it (iii. 10, 11). Indeed, throughout St. Paul's Epistles we meet with passages bearing on the maintenance of Christian discipline in the Church. To the Thessalonians he writes, 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us' (2 Thess. iii. 6). In closing his Epistle to the Romans he says, 'Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of

stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned, and turn away from them' (xvi. 17). In the Pastoral Epistles, too, reference is made to the *reproof* which should be administered to certain classes of offenders who yet are not to be altogether put away. But while the Apostles were anxious to guard the purity of the Church, and the honour of Christ before the world, they charged the ministers and members of the Church to cultivate a tender and forgiving spirit. Thus St. Paul, after saying to the Thessalonians, 'If any man obeyeth not our word by this Epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed,' immediately adds, 'And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother' (2 Thess. iii. 14, 15). And to the Galatians he writes, 'Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted' (vi. 1).

All these considerations show that there must be *rule* and *order* in the Church of Christ. The Pastoral Epistles still further evince this. But it is now generally admitted, that no particular form of Church government is enjoined as essential. General principles are laid down in the Divine word; but the application of them may vary according to peculiar circumstances. Each of the three leading forms of Church-polity, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and the Congregational, is admissible; and there are some religious communities which present a modification of the Episcopal and Presbyterian systems in happy combination. The exclusive claims of Diocesan Episcopacy, as set forth in what is popularly termed the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession,—claims which we regard as utterly unfounded,—will be considered in a subsequent Chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE SACRAMENTS—BAPTISM, AS ADMINISTERED TO ADULTS.

CHRISTIANITY has two ordinances of a class peculiar to themselves,—ordinances instituted by the Lord Jesus, involving an outward and visible sign of spiritual grace, and having a special relation to the *covenant* of grace. Of that covenant they are not only *signs* but *seals*, recognising its obligations, and assuring to every worthy recipient its blessings. These ordinances we designate the *sacraments* of our holy religion.

Baptism is the initiatory sacrament of the Christian covenant. It involves the solemn and formal admission of an individual to Christian discipleship, by the application of water 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' It was instituted by our Lord in the commission which He gave to His Apostles, after His resurrection from the dead, and before His ascension to His heavenly glory (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). In obedience to His command the Apostles gathered all who embraced their message, who submitted to the authority of the Lord Jesus, and sought salvation in Him alone, into Christian Churches, by the administration of this sacrament.

The rite of Baptism was not new. It had been adopted, in certain cases, among the Jews, and especially by the sect of the Essenes. It was the distinguishing feature of the mission and ministry of John the Baptist. But baptism, as administered by him, had a different significance from the Christian sacrament. It implied, on the part of the recipient, two things,—a profession of repentance for sin, and faith in the almost immediate mani-

festation of the Messiah, whose forerunner John was. All the declarations of the Baptist evince this, while they afford a striking testimony to the personal dignity and authority of Him who was about to appear. St. Paul, too, has clearly marked this character of the baptism of John, in his address to the disciples at Ephesus, who had only received that baptism:—'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him who should come after him, that is, on Jesus' (Acts xix. 4). Christian baptism, on the other hand, implies an avowal of belief in Jesus, not only as the Messiah but as the Son in the Triune Godhead, and the cordial acceptance of the covenant of grace established through Him.

Among thoughtful Christians there have been controversies both as to the *subjects* and the *mode* of baptism. With regard to the former, we hold that not only should adult persons who turn away from sin and embrace the Saviour be baptized, but that the little children of believers may thus be admitted to His visible Church. The grounds on which we rest this conviction will be stated in the next Chapter.

In respect to the *mode* of baptism, we hold that it may be administered either by immersion, or by pouring or sprinkling. It is not proposed to discuss this subject at length. The circumstances under which baptism was administered to large multitudes by John, and to three thousand persons on the day of Pentecost,—not to mention other cases,—would seem to shut out the supposition that all these were immersed. The validity of pouring or sprinkling, as a mode of administration, appears to us to be sanctioned by the manner in which St. Peter, after saying of the converts in the house of Cornelius, 'And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost *fell* on them, even as on us at the beginning,' added, 'And I remembered the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost' (Acts xi. 15, 16). Nor does the passage in Rom. vi. 3, 4, on which so much reliance has been placed, as indicating that baptism,

in the Apostolic age, was always by immersion, appear to us really to warrant this conclusion. That passage is, 'Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.' Now we regard the sentiment of the Apostle as being, that as the burial of the Saviour was the public proof, the open declaration to all men, of the reality of His death, so baptism in the name of Jesus is, in the case of all adults who believe in Him, the open profession that they share with Him in His death. But this participation in His death must lead, the Apostle argues, to a participation in that new life which He, as the risen Saviour, communicates to all who are united to Him.

The *qualifications* of candidates for baptism, and the *significance* of the sacrament as administered to adult persons, are topics of deep interest. There must be an admission, on the part of the baptized persons, of the lofty claims of the Lord Jesus, as implied in the baptismal formula and the commission of which it forms a part; and there must be a profession of turning away from sin, of submission to the Redeemer's authority, and of looking to Him for salvation. And as the ordinance itself symbolises the gift of the Spirit to cleanse our corrupt nature, and hallow us to the Divine service, there should be faith in the promise of the Holy Ghost, and an expectation of His purifying and comforting grace.

For it can scarcely be questioned that baptism, as administered to adults, was regarded not only as a significant symbol, but also as *a means of grace*. The Scriptures, indeed, give no countenance to the doctrine of the necessary efficacy of the outward rite of baptism, but rather warn us against it. It would be contrary to the whole spirit of Christianity, which makes prominent the spirituality of religion, and insists so strongly on the personal access of each individual to God through Christ for spiritual blessing, to maintain that the

outward act of baptism was *necessarily* connected with the renewing grace of the Holy Ghost. St. Peter has expressly disclaimed the sentiment, that any outward washing can avail for salvation, apart from the response of a heart that trusts in Christ. After speaking of Noah and his family as 'saved through water,' he adds, 'Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience towards God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ' (1 Peter iii. 20, 21). Throughout the New Testament the great blessings of forgiveness and inward renewal are connected with a living faith in the Lord Jesus, and are spoken of as realised under whatever circumstances that faith is put forth. It is upon our union with Christ—a union which faith establishes and maintains—that the Eternal Father accepts us, and imparts to us the life-giving Spirit. But that faith is to be *avowed* in the way of Christ's own appointment; and thus, in the case of adults, this union with Christ may be said to be *completed* by their being baptized in His name. Receiving Him by a personal trust in His sacrifice, bowing without reserve to His authority, and standing forth to confess Him in His own ordinance, we are 'baptized into Jesus Christ,' share in the virtue of His death, and receive that new life which flows from Him as our Risen Lord. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation' (Rom. x. 10).

Among those who were baptized in the Apostolic age there were some, like the converts in the house of Cornelius, who had received forgiveness and the renewing grace of the Spirit *before* they were baptized. The Scriptural narrative places this beyond a doubt. 'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. . . . Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ' (Acts x. 44; 47, 48). In referring

to this event in his address to the Council at Jerusalem, St. Peter spoke of the gift of the Holy Ghost, vouchsafed to these converts upon their believing, as imparting to them inward purity. 'And God, which knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith' (Acts xv. 8, 9). But, probably, in the majority of cases, persons who turned away from sin to the Lord Jesus had not attained settled rest and peace in Him before they openly confessed their adherence to Him. These were encouraged to expect rich spiritual blessing in connection with the observance of Christ's ordinance, and the public profession of His Name. Thus St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said to the multitudes who anxiously inquired, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' 'Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost' (Acts ii. 38). Thus, too, Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus, when subdued by the appearance of the Lord Jesus, and sincerely penitent for his opposition to His cause, 'And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name' (Acts xxii. 16).

It only remains to advert to the importance of baptism, as *the* mode of admission to the visible Church. In Christian countries, indeed, the larger number of those who are brought to a decided closure with the Lord Jesus have been baptized in infancy, and already stand within the pale of the Church: but their admission to the full rights and privileges of Church-membership should be marked by their solemn recognition as thoughtfully accepting this position; and then, at the table of the Lord, they should openly avow, again and again, their trust in Him and their devotion to His service. But all who have not been baptized, when they bow to the authority of Christ and turn to Him to seek salvation through His blood, should be publicly baptized, according to His own institution, and thus take their place in His visible Church.

CHAPTER III.

THE SACRAMENTS—BAPTISM, AS ADMINISTERED TO INFANTS.

THE ground on which we specially rest the admission of infants to the Christian Church by baptism, is the fact that, when little children were brought to our Lord in the days of His flesh, He graciously welcomed them, and affirmed, 'Of such is the kingdom of God.'

There are, indeed, other considerations which support this practice. There is the fact, that the covenant which God made with Abraham embraced his children, and that, through the long years of the Mosaic economy, the infant children of the Israelites were introduced by the rite of circumcision to a covenant-relation to God. They were thus solemnly recognised as belonging to the Church of God; and had it been the plan of the Lord Jesus that the children of His people should have no place in His visible Church,—that they should grow up outside its pale,—so great a change in the constitution of the Church would surely have been expressly indicated. This consideration, too, is strengthened by the emphatic manner in which the provisions of redemption are spoken of as extending to all mankind, so that little children have an interest in the economy of grace, and stand in an important relation to Christ.

Another argument in favour of infant-baptism is derived from the fact, that the Apostles were accustomed to baptize *households*. The cases of Lydia and the Philippian jailer will readily suggest themselves. Of the former it is said, 'And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and

abide there' (Acts xvi. 15). When the jailer had been aroused to earnest inquiry, and he and all that were in his house had listened to 'the word of the Lord' as declared by Paul and Silas, it is recorded, that 'he was baptized, he and all his, immediately' (ver. 33). St Paul, too, in writing to the Corinthians, mentions that he had baptized 'the household of Stephanas' (1 Cor. i. 16). Now, surely, the probability is, that some of these households embraced little children; and on the theory that *only* adult persons are to be baptized, and that upon the distinct profession of faith in the Lord Jesus, the baptism of households would be a very rare occurrence.

But while these considerations have considerable weight, we turn with special interest to the declaration of our Lord already referred to, and to His own beautiful and impressive action, when He took the little children in His arms, 'and blessed them, laying His hands upon them.' We regard that declaration and that action as implying that He designed the little children of His people to have a place in His visible Church; and we infer that they have a right to the initiatory rite of the Christian covenant.

The narrative of which we speak is most instructive and beautiful. It indicates, in the clearest manner, the affectionate regard of the Lord Jesus to little children. When His disciples would have repelled those who brought them to Him for His blessing,—thinking, perhaps, that it was beneath His dignity to have His time and attention taken up with little children, and that such applications, if encouraged, would become troublesome,—Jesus was 'moved with indignation.' He was grieved that His disciples should have conveyed to those around, and especially to the parents of these children, a false impression of His character, and of the economy which He came to establish; and He said to them emphatically, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me; forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God' (Mark x. 14). Doubtless, as the Saviour took these little ones into His arms, He thought of them as possessing all that distinguishes the nature of man, and invests

that nature with so high importance; and He thought of them as belonging to the race with which He had made Himself one, that He might redeem and save it. They were His brethren, His sisters; and He welcomed them with the love that caused Him to assume our nature and die for us upon the cross.

But we take, more especially, His remarkable words, 'Of such is the kingdom of God.' These words, we maintain, distinctly imply that little children may have a place in the gospel-church, may be numbered among the people of God under the new and perfect economy of grace over which the Lord Jesus presides and rules. It is, of course, admitted, that the expression includes adult persons of a childlike temper,—persons characterised by humility, teachableness, and a confiding spirit; but it is equally evident that it includes also little children,—that our Lord's meaning was, not simply, 'Of adult persons like these is the kingdom of God,' but 'Of such children and of adult persons like them is the kingdom of God.' For otherwise, how could this form a reason for His welcoming the infants brought to Him and 'blessing' them? What conclusiveness would there be in the argument, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me; forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God,' if little children literally could not have place in 'the kingdom of God,' the gospel-church?

In confirmation of this view of our Lord's words, we may refer to the cherished modes of thought of those who were around Him. We have seen that, under the Mosaic economy, the little children of the Israelites were admitted by circumcision to the congregation of God's people, and were recognised as having an interest in the blessings of the covenant of which circumcision was the seal. If then, we imagine, for a moment, that our Lord designed to constitute His visible Church on a different basis, so as not to comprehend the little children of His people, can we conceive of any thing more misleading than the declaration which He now uttered, 'Of such is the kingdom of God,' accompanied, as it was, by His solemnly blessing the little ones brought to Him?

We hold, then, that it is a part of our Lord's plan that the children of His people should be brought into His visible Church, and that the sacrament of baptism may be rightly administered to them. Nor can we doubt that He looks with favour upon the parents who, having given themselves to Him, thoughtfully and prayerfully bring their children to be thus recognised as belonging to Him,—redeemed by His blood, and having an interest in the promises of His covenant.

We reject, indeed, the theory, that regeneration uniformly accompanies baptism,—that every baptized child is spiritually renewed by the Holy Ghost. It is contrary to the whole genius of Christianity to teach, that any outward act is *necessarily* followed by spiritual blessing. But may we not well believe that, in the case of children whose parents enter thoughtfully into the design of Christ, and who gratefully recognise the relation in which their children stand to Him, this sacrament may be attended by a special blessing? May not grace be vouchsafed to them in connection with their solemn dedication to the Triune God in Christian baptism? Mysterious, indeed, are all the operations of the Spirit on the human mind; and a special mystery must ever attach to His working on the minds of children whose powers of thought are yet undeveloped. Still we are assured that in the case of children who die in infancy there is a communication of spiritual life to fit them for that world of light upon which they are to enter. And if this be so, may there not be a similar communication when, with intelligent faith, and earnest prayer, and the solemn purpose to train their children for Christ, parents bring them to be devoted to Him in baptism? We do not positively affirm that there is such a communication; but we believe that there may be, even as John the Baptist was 'filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb'; and we hold that it is right to pray for it.

The *obligations* resulting from infant baptism require to be carefully pondered. It is most important to maintain, that the baptism of a child is *not* an *isolated* act, having no relation to anything that is to follow. It is a solemn introduction to

Christian discipleship; and they who bring their children to be baptized virtually pledge themselves to train them as disciples of the Lord Jesus, as members of His Church, though not, as yet, by reason of their tender age, entitled to its full privileges. The influence of home,—the course of education,—the whole system, indeed, of culture and discipline, should be directed to this end that, as childhood merges into youth, these children should stand forth thoughtfully to confess Christ, to avow their acceptance of a covenant-relation to Him, and thus to take their place as fully recognised members of His Church, and maintain that position to the very close of life.

For, indeed, the transition from childhood to youth must involve a *decision*, one way or the other, in the case of every one who was baptized in infancy. There must be, in the very nature of things, either an acceptance, by the young person, of his position as a member of Christ's Church, by a personal coming to the Saviour, and an open avowal of His Name, or an ignoring of his baptism with its privileges and responsibilities. This consideration should banish that criminal thoughtlessness as to the claims of Christ which too often characterises young persons, and arouse them to the importance of a personal closure with Him to whom in infancy they were dedicated.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SACRAMENTS—THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE second Christian sacrament is the supper of the Lord. This was instituted by the Lord Jesus 'in the night in which He was betrayed.' Assembled with His Apostles at the paschal feast, in the course of that repast He took bread, and when He had given thanks He brake it, and gave it to them saying, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me'; and when the supper was over, He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, 'Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins. This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me' (Matt. xxvi. 26—29, collated with 1 Cor. xi. 23—25).

The Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist, as it is frequently termed, was thus originally combined with a social meal. This arrangement was continued in the early Church; but the disorders to which it gave rise led to its abandonment. Such disorders had place in the Church of Corinth, even during the life of the Apostles, and were reproved by St. Paul in his first Epistle to that Church. For many ages the Supper of the Lord has been separated from the social meal, and has been observed with peculiar solemnity as the most sacred ordinance of our religion.

Before proceeding to state what we conceive to be the true character and import of this sacrament, it is necessary to advert briefly to some of the controversies that have taken place respecting it, and some of the errors that still prevail in certain branches of the Christian Church.

We need not dwell at length on the denial of the cup to the people, which has been practised in later ages by the Church of Rome. Such a practice involves a most unauthorised and presumptuous mutilation of our Lord's own institution. To refuse to the people the cup which He has appointed to be the emblem of His own blood shed for the remission of our sins, is to set aside His authority and counteract His design. It is worthy of our attention, also, that the Apostle Paul, when writing of this sacrament to the Corinthian Church, invariably combines the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup, thus distinctly recognising the practice of the early Churches, and showing us that he never contemplated the eating of the sacramental bread without the drinking of the sacramental cup.

Another grave error of the Church of Rome is the doctrine designated *Transubstantiation*. That doctrine is, that when the words of consecration are pronounced by the officiating priest, the bread ceases to be bread and becomes the very body of the Lord Jesus, while the wine ceases to be wine and becomes His very blood; and, since the Person of Christ cannot be divided, each of the elements is held to be changed into His Divine-human Person. Now it is obvious that this theory contradicts the direct evidence of our senses, to which evidence our Lord Himself appealed to establish the fact of His own resurrection from the dead; and it is opposed also to the language of St. Paul, who speaks of the bread as still bread when partaken of by the people of Christ (1 Cor. xi. 26—29). The Lutheran doctrine of *Consubstantiation*—that while the sacramental elements continue to be bread and wine, there is present in and under them the very Person of the Redeemer—is also, we conceive, utterly unsupported by Scripture. The words of institution, 'This is My body,' 'This is My blood,' certainly do not imply it; and the very strongest expressions found in the discourses of our Lord respecting eating His flesh and drinking His blood, —the strongest expressions, too, which are found in the writings of His Apostles,—are interchanged with others which show that they refer to *a spiritual appropriation of His sacrifice*

by a living, earnest faith. To such an appropriation of the one perfect sacrifice for sin every penitent sinner, every humble believer, is invited; and this is followed by the attainment, and then by the confirmation and nourishment, of spiritual life.

But the Roman Catholic Church has gone beyond affirming the theory of transubstantiation. It has founded on the simple institution of our Lord the doctrine of *the Sacrifice of the Mass*. That doctrine, as set forth in the carefully chosen words of the Council of Trent, is, that the Lord Jesus, 'in the last supper, on the night in which He was betrayed, that He might leave to His beloved spouse the Church a visible sacrifice, such as the nature of man requires, by which that bloody sacrifice once for all to be completed on the cross might be represented, and the memory of it might remain until the end of the world, and its saving virtue might be applied for the remission of our daily sins,—declaring Himself constituted a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, offered up His own body and blood under the species of bread and wine to God the Father; and under the same symbols delivered them to His Apostles, whom He then constituted Priests of the New Testament, that they might receive them; and commanded them and their successors in the priesthood to offer the same, through these words, "Do this in remembrance of Me."' Now in this passage there are three assumptions, each of which we hold to be unfounded and erroneous. It is assumed that there was a change of the sacramental elements into the body and blood of our Lord; it is assumed that He not only gave these elements to His Apostles, but that under the species of bread and wine He offered up His body and blood in sacrifice to the Father; and it is assumed that in uttering the words, 'Do this in remembrance of Me,' He did not refer to the observance by His Apostles and His people generally of this commemorative rite, but that He constituted them Priests, in the strict and proper sense, and empowered them and their successors thus to offer Him up as a sacrifice for sin. We have already assigned reasons for rejecting the theory of

transubstantiation, with which the Romish doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass is bound up; and the other positions on which this doctrine rests are equally unsupported. It is contrary to the whole tenor of the New Testament, and especially to the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews, to affirm that Christ twice offered up Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice, first at the last supper and then on the cross; and the true application of the words on which reliance is placed, as indicating the priestly character of the Christian ministry, is shown by St. Paul, when he writes to the Corinthians, 'In like manner, also, the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do, *as oft as ye drink it*, in remembrance of Me' (1 Cor. xi. 25).

Among the doctrines held by the Ritualistic school in the Church of England, there is one, to which they give great prominence, that resembles very nearly that which we have now considered,—the doctrine of *the Eucharistic Sacrifice*. It is affirmed, by the ablest exponents of this theory, that in some mysterious and ineffable manner 'the body and blood of our Saviour Christ are present really and truly,' under the form of bread and wine, 'by virtue of the consecration, through the power of the Holy Ghost'; that, while the sacramental bread and wine are not to be adored, yet 'Christ Himself, really and truly, but spiritually and ineffably, present in the sacrament, is *therein* to be adored'; and that the minister, as a priest, does, in an important sense, offer up on earth, as well as plead before the Father, the body and blood of His dear Son, 'even as in heaven Christ, our great High Priest, ever offers Himself before the Eternal Father, pleading by His presence His sacrifice of Himself once offered up on the cross.' Now our objection to all this is, that it is utterly unsupported by Holy Scripture, and at variance with the beautiful simplicity of its statements respecting this holy sacrament. The actual presence of the very body and blood of the Lord Jesus in and under the sacramental elements is nowhere taught in the New Testament: nor is the Christian

ministry a priesthood in the proper sense of that phrase. Had it sustained this character, prominence would doubtless have been given to it in the Pastoral Epistles; and it would have been recognised in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the subject of priesthood is dwelt upon at length. But the very opposite of this is the case. The one brief statement, 'We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle' (Heb. xiii. 10), by no means implies that there is a true and proper sacrifice in the supper of the Lord, and that the officiating minister is a priest. The 'altar' of which we eat is the cross; and as we appropriate Christ the Crucified, all the benefits of His redeeming work accrue to us. There is, indeed, in the secondary sense, a universal priesthood of believers; but in the strict and proper sense the Lord Jesus is the only Priest, and through His prevalent intercession each of us may have access into the holiest of all, and bear away every spiritual blessing.

But it is a relief to turn from these systems to the simple teaching of the New Testament respecting this sacrament, and to contemplate it under the leading aspects in which it is there presented. There are four leading views of it which claim our attention.

1. It *commemorates* the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus, and sets forth their *vicarious* and *sacrificial* character.

The words uttered by our Lord Himself, as He instituted this sacrament, clearly evince this. As His Apostles were gathered around Him, He handed to them the bread, constituting it the emblem of His body as just about to be 'broken' for them; and afterwards He gave them the cup, appointing it to be the symbol of His 'blood of the new covenant,' about to be 'shed for many unto remission of sins;' and in each instance He charged His Apostles, and through them all His people, to observe this sacred rite 'in remembrance' of Himself.

It is important to bear in mind how powerful an evidence this sacrament, observed, as the whole history of the Church shows, from the time of its institution, affords of the *reality* of

the great event which it commemorates. The death of Jesus,—His death of violence and shame,—endured on behalf of our sinful race, has thus been kept before the view of the Church and the world as the greatest fact of Christianity. And with this fact we may assuredly combine that of His *resurrection.* For had the body of Jesus remained in the sepulchre and seen corruption,—had the Jews been able to point to it as falsifying His prediction that He should rise again on the third day,—His disciples would have shrunk from commemorating an event so sad and overwhelming. But because He rose from the dead, and was thus 'declared to be the Son of God with power,' His people, in every age, have reverently and gratefully commemorated the awful and mysterious scene of Calvary.

It is instructive, also, to observe the distinct and emphatic manner in which this sacrament sets forth the *sacrificial* character of the Redeemer's death. As we gather round His table, from time to time, we proclaim our conviction that that death has a character peculiar to itself,—that it stands *alone* and *unparalleled.* Others have sacrificed life to benefit their fellows; but every Christian would instantly recoil from the thought of *thus* commemorating their death. But the death of Jesus was more than the sublimest instance of self-sacrifice: it was a vicarious and expiatory sacrifice offered unto God for us,—a sacrifice, too, which ever retains its efficacy, and through which successive generations of men are to receive 'the remission of sins,' and to enjoy all the privileges of the 'new' and better 'covenant.'

2. The supper of the Lord implies, on the part of each communicant, an *avowal* of his *personal trust* in the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus for justification and spiritual life; while it forms a beautiful symbolical expression of the *personal appropriation* of His sacrifice.

Had the commemoration of the fact of the death of Jesus, and the setting forth of its vicarious character, been all that was intended in the appointment of this sacrament, it might have sufficed, if we may reverently say so, for the bread to be

solemnly broken, as the emblem of the Saviour's body, and the wine poured out as the emblem of His blood: but one grand feature of this sacrament is, that each communicant for himself eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. Thus each of us declares, in effect, that he takes Christ, the Crucified One, as his atoning Sacrifice, and the Source of his spiritual life. Such an appropriation of the sacrifice of our Lord is the very essence of saving faith; and whenever we come to His table we should put forth renewed acts of this faith. While we avow to our brethren and to the world, that we renounce every other refuge than the cross, and hope for salvation only through the Son of God who 'loved us and gave Himself for us,' we should receive Christ afresh, and feed on Him as the 'living bread that came down from heaven.'

3. A believing participation of the Lord's supper is an act of *fellowship*, or *communion*, *with the universal Church of Christ.*

In this sacrament we avow our oneness with each other, as resulting from our common appropriation of the Redeemer's sacrifice, and our common union with Him by faith. Thus it is that we sometimes speak of it as 'the holy communion.' We all partake of one bread and drink of one cup,—that bread symbolising the body of our crucified Lord, and that cup symbolising His blood poured out for our redemption. St. Paul has placed this sacrament before us under this aspect:—'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Cor. x. 16, 17).*

4. Finally, the sacrament of the Lord's supper is to be regarded as *a seal of the new covenant established through the blood of Jesus*, and as involving, in the case of all who receive it with

* The *marginal* rendering of the last clause in the Revised Version is clearer, and, on several grounds, preferable:—'Seeing that there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body.'

sincere devotion and lively faith, *a renewal and confirmation of that covenant.*

The correctness and importance of this view are placed beyond a doubt by the words of our Lord in the institution of this sacrament. He spoke of the cup as His blood of 'the new covenant'; and the reception of the sacramental elements is thus marked out as a *covenant-act.* If we enter upon this service with thoughtful earnestness and an intelligent faith, we renew the dedication of ourselves to God in Christ; and God, in effect, seals and confirms to us the promises of that covenant. We bind ourselves to Him to be His people; and He assures us that He will be to us a God in time and in eternity.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY—THE APOSTLES, PROPHETS, AND EVANGELISTS—THE THEORY OF THE APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

OUR Lord, during His earthly ministry, made provision for the announcement of His claims, and for the publication of the entire system of truth and duty which He inculcated, after His own departure to the Father. He gathered around Him disciples, and from among them He chose twelve to be His constant attendants, that He might train them to be His ambassadors to the world, and to establish and regulate Christian Churches. These were privileged not only to listen to His public teaching, but to witness the more private developments of His character, and to hear His conversation when retired from the multitude. The impression made upon the minds of the faithful eleven, by their intercourse with their Lord, has been recorded by St. John in the words, 'The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only-begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth' (John. i. 14). As He was about to enter upon His deepest sufferings, He addressed them on the position in which they would be placed by His departure, and assured them of the rich communication of the Holy Spirit, to qualify them for their special duties, and to sustain them under all their trials. After His death and resurrection, He gave them His solemn commission. On the very day on which He rose from the dead, He said to them, 'As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you' (John xx. 21); and subsequently, on the mountain in Galilee, He charged them to go and 'make disciples of all the nations,'

assuring them of His constant presence and support. They were not, however, immediately to enter upon this world-wide mission, but to wait in Jerusalem for 'the promise of the Father.' On the day of Pentecost that promise was fulfilled; and the grace of the Holy Ghost gave to the Apostles a wisdom, a boldness, and a power, which they had never before possessed. Gifts of utterance, also, were imparted to them and to many others; and for several years—probably until the last of the Apostles passed away from earth—miraculous endowments, in diverse forms, were continued in the Church. Ultimately these were withdrawn; but from the day of Pentecost until now the Lord Jesus has raised up men to carry the message of His grace to the ignorant and the careless and impenitent,—to lead men to Him in self-renouncing trust,—to build up His people in faith and holiness,—and to watch over and rule His Churches in subordination to Himself.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul has given us a comprehensive view of this action of our glorified Lord. Having referred to the varied gifts by which the people of Christ are distinguished as all conferred by Him, he goes on to speak of the fulfilment in Him of the prophetic oracle, 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men,' and then He adds, 'And He gave some to be Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (iv. 11—13).

Of the ministers named in this passage, three classes—the Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists—were *extraordinary*. They belonged to the period of the planting of the Church; and they have had no successors in the ages that have followed.

1. The office of an *Apostle* was distinguished by several peculiar characteristics.

(1) It was essential that they who sustained it should be

able to bear a *personal testimony* to the great fact of *our Lord's resurrection from the dead*,—that fact on which the whole system of Christianity reposes. In St. Peter's address to the assembled disciples, soon after our Lord's ascension, he referred to the fall of Judas Iscariot, who had been one of the twelve, and added, 'Of the men, therefore, which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that He was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of His resurrection' (Acts. i. 21, 22). St. Paul, also, when asserting his own Apostolical authority, appeals to his personal knowledge of this fact as included in the proof of his claims. 'Am I not free? Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?' (1 Cor. ix. 1.) It was the risen Saviour who arrested him when a fiery persecutor; and to that event, which changed the whole current of his life, he was never weary of referring.

(2) A second peculiarity of the office of the Apostles was, that they were empowered to teach *authoritatively* the whole system of Christianity, so that from their decision there could be no appeal.

It was to them, especially, that our Lord, in the days of His flesh, addressed the words, 'Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (Matt. xviii. 18). Jesus Himself left no written record of His teaching: but it was His design that, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, His Apostles should recall His words, and hand them down to successive generations. Nor was this all. The Holy Spirit was to 'guide them into all the truth,' so that they should be able to unfold the perfect scheme of Christian doctrine, privilege, and duty (John xiv. 25, 26; xvi. 12—14). We accept, then, the writings of the Apostles, and those which they endorsed, as constituting the Scriptures of the New Testament; and in these writings they still speak to us, and, in one sense, continue to discharge their high and peculiar function.

(3) It was another characteristic of the office of the Apostles, that they were enabled to work *miracles* in attestation of the claims of the Lord Jesus, and in support of the whole system of truth and duty which they taught in His name, They, indeed, were not the only persons whom the Holy Spirit thus honoured; but it was essential to their position, and to the discharge of their high duties, that their teaching should be thus attested, as well as by the saving operations of the Holy Ghost on the minds of those who received their message. Thus St. Paul appeals to the Corinthians: 'I am become foolish: ye compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing was I behind the very chiefest Apostles, though I am nothing. Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs, and wonders, and mighty works' (2 Cor. xii. 11, 12).

(4) It was an additional distinction of the office of the Apostles, that the Holy Spirit honoured the laying on of their hands, accompanied by earnest prayer, by imparting to those whom they thus marked out even His miraculous gifts. In illustration of this statement it will suffice to refer to the narratives found in Acts viii. 14—20; xix. 5, 6. This distinction was intended not to magnify the individuals themselves, but rather to magnify the Apostolic office, to indicate the persons who sustained it, and to enforce the authority of their teaching.

2. The *Prophets* of the New Testament economy were persons who gave utterance to Divine truth under a special Divine inspiration. Some of them, indeed, were occasionally enabled to predict coming events. Thus Agabus, who was a member of the Church at Jerusalem, on his visit to the Syrian Antioch, foretold that there should be a great famine over all the world; and subsequently, at Cæsarea, when the Apostle Paul was there on his way to Jerusalem, he predicted that the Apostle should be bound by the Jews of that city and delivered to the Gentiles (Acts xi. 27, 28; xxi. 10, 11). But there is no ground for supposing that this power was ordinarily bestowed on any of the Christian prophets: their function was, to give utterance

to Divine truth in an elevated and impressive manner, so as to arrest the attention of the ungodly, enlarge the views of believers, encourage them in the discharge of duty, and console them under trials and sorrows.

Instances of these prophesyings occur in the sacred narrative, in the cases of Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist,—Mary, the mother of our Lord,—Zacharias,—and the aged and pious Simeon. In most of the early Christian Churches there were some on whom the Spirit of God occasionally rested, enabling them to utter spiritual truth with peculiar clearness and power. The Church at Corinth was especially favoured in this respect; and St. Paul, while cautioning that Church against any deviation from 'decency and order' in its public worship, recognises the value of 'prophesying,' and places this gift above that of speaking in an unknown tongue. The whole course of his remarks in 1 Cor. xiv. should be carefully studied; and his comprehensive statement in vers. 3, 4, is very striking:—'He that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and comfort, and consolation. He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the Church.' In a subsequent passage he adverts to the effect which the addresses of the Prophets often produced on the unbelieving:—'If all prophesy, and there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is reproved by all, he is judged by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed' (vers. 24, 25).

3. The *Evangelists* spoken of by St. Paul held an intermediate position between the Apostles and the ordinary Pastors of the Churches. We may select, as examples of persons sustaining this office, Philip, who is referred to as an 'Evangelist' in Acts xxi. 8, Silas, Luke, Timothy, and Titus.

The Evangelists were specially appointed by the Apostles, and empowered to visit certain districts, not only to preach the gospel, but to perfect the organisation of Christian communities,—to reprove those who walked disorderly, or who caused divisions in the Church,—to ordain presbyters and deacons,—

and to set in order every thing that required adjustment. The Epistles of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus shed a clear light both on the duties devolving upon them, and the large powers with which they were invested. It may suffice to quote his opening words to Titus, 'For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge' (i. 5), and one or two of the charges which he afterwards addressed to him. Having referred to certain 'vain talkers and deceivers,' he directs Titus to 'reprove them sharply, that they might be sound in the faith'; he specifies the duties which he should inculcate on various classes of persons; and, after calling upon him to 'avoid foolish questionings, and genealogies, and strifes, and fightings about the law,' he adds, 'A factious man, after a first and second admonition, refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned' (i. 10, 13; iii. 9—11).

The Evangelists spoken of in the New Testament must be placed among the extraordinary Ministers who belonged to the period of the planting of the Church. Their office was conferred on them by the Apostles; and the special authority with which they were invested was derived from the Apostles, who in this, as in other respects, carried out the will of their glorified Lord. But there is an analogy between some of the duties which devolved on them, and those which belong to Missionaries who plant Christianity in heathen lands, and some of whom may be properly invested with the charge of visiting the infant Churches placed under the care of younger Ministers or of native Agents, to maintain their order, to guard purity of doctrine, and to secure the observance of a healthy discipline. We admit, too, that the system of Diocesan Episcopacy, regarded as a prudential arrangement, and the powers confided to Chairmen of Districts in the Wesleyan-Methodist economy, present some resemblance to the arrangements made by the Apostles for the benefit of the Churches, in the appointment of Evangelists. But the lofty and exclusive claims of Diocesan Episcopacy, as

put forth by some parties, are unsupported by Holy Scripture. It is not our intention fully to discuss the theory of the Apostolical Succession; but it seems necessary briefly to advert to it.

That theory is, that Bishops are, in an important sense, the successors of the Apostles, and are a distinct order from the 'elders' or 'presbyters' to whom the Apostles committed the care of particular Churches; that to them exclusively belongs the power of ordaining men to the Christian ministry; that the imposition of their hands in ordination constitutes those who receive that ordination valid Ministers of Christ, and gives to their ministerial acts, and especially to their administration of the sacraments, a peculiar power and efficacy; and that those who are not in communion with an episcopally-ordained ministry, and the Churches over which they preside, are not members of the visible Church of Christ, but, although they may be sincerely pious, remain 'external to the Holy Fold.'

But where, in the word of God, is the authority for such a scheme as this? It cannot surely be maintained that Diocesan Bishops have succeeded to the Apostolical office; for, as we have seen, that office implied qualifications and powers which no one can now possess. No man could be an Apostle who had not himself seen the risen Lord, and who had not been empowered by Him authoritatively to unfold the Christian scheme. Then as to the power of ordination, where is the authority for *confining* it to an order of Diocesan Bishops, especially when St. Paul says to Timothy, 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery?' (1 Tim. iv. 14.) In the face of this declaration how can it be maintained that the existence of an order of diocesan bishops is essential to the existence of the Church, and that if presbyterian ordination is substituted for episcopal, the community in which this takes place is not to be accounted a branch of the visible Church of Christ? Had these been the sentiments of the Inspired Writers, they would have spoken on these subjects with a distinctness suited to their importance: but no such statements are found

in their writings, and the general principles which they lay down, relative to the Church of Christ, are utterly at variance with the entire scheme.

But we go beyond this. Ordination is to be viewed not as *constituting* a man, of itself, a Minister of Jesus Christ, but as solemnly *recognising* the call of Christ to that office, as tested and acknowledged by the Church. We cannot admit that ordination, as this theory supposes, impresses on a man an indelible character, making him the instrument of grace and blessing to men, irrespectively of his personal piety, and his ability to edify by teaching the Church of God. It is not by the external marks of office, however correct, and however regularly transmitted, that our Lord directs us to discern the true ministers of religion, but by their personal character and the fruits of their doctrine. 'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. *By their fruits ye shall know them*' (Matt. vii. 15). The efficacy of the sacraments, too, depends not on the ordination of the person administering,—though it is fitting that they should be administered by those who are separated to the work of the ministry,—but on the faith of the recipient.

It is not necessary to dwell on the fact, that the terms 'bishops' and 'presbyters' are used interchangeably in the New Testament; for this is admitted on all hands, and they who hold the theory of the Apostolical Succession defend it on other grounds. But these grounds are utterly insufficient; and it is opposed to the general spirit of our holy religion.

Far be it from us to regard the system of Episcopacy as unlawful, or to contend that it may not be, in many cases, a convenient and useful arrangement. It was natural that, when several presbyters were associated in the care of the Churches in a particular city or neighbourhood, one of them should be regarded as the chief, not as being of a distinct order, but as *primus inter pares*, 'the first among equals.' So, too, there may now exist the strongest reasons why some Ministers of large experience and special qualifications should be appointed

to exercise a general oversight of large districts, with the several ministerial and other agencies which they embrace. Our objection is to the theory which makes Diocesan Bishops a distinct order from the 'bishops' or 'presbyters' spoken of in the New Testament,—which restricts to them the power of ordination,—and which makes their exercise of that power essential to the existence of the visible Church.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY—THE PASTORAL OFFICE—THE ORDER OF DEACONS.

WE come now to the consideration of the position and functions of the last class of Ministers mentioned by St. Paul in the comprehensive passage which we have quoted from the Epistle to the Ephesians,—*Pastors and Teachers*. In common with nearly all expositors, we regard these words as indicating *one* class of office-bearers, the two terms being combined to express more fully their varied duties. While the Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists belonged to the period of the planting of the Church, Christian Pastors belong to every age, and will doubtless be continued by the Lord Jesus to His Church, until the winding up of the present economy, and the gathering of all His people around Him in the realms of light.

In contemplating the exercise of the Christian Ministry in the ordinary course of the Church's history, we must keep in view the arrangements of the Apostles for the Churches which they planted, and especially the directions given by St. Paul in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus. The state of things indicated in his first Epistle to the Corinthians could only have place in a period when miraculous gifts were vouchsafed to several members of a Church. In the ordinary condition of Christian Churches, the Ministers appointed to watch over them, to promote their edification and establishment in knowledge and holiness, and to maintain their godly order, were *Presbyters* or *Bishops;* while there was an order of *Deacons*, who attended chiefly to the temporal affairs of the Church. Thus we read

that when Paul and Barnabas, towards the close of the Apostle's first missionary journey, revisited the Churches they had planted, they 'appointed for them elders in every Church' (Acts xiv. 23). Thus, too, St. Paul addresses his Epistle to the Philippian Church to 'all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons' (i. 1). So, also, Timothy and Titus, in the exercise of their office as Evangelists, were commissioned to ordain elders or bishops in every city which they visited; while the qualifications of those who should sustain this office were dwelt upon by the Apostle at length.

It is important to bear in mind, that it belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Head of the Church, to *call* men to serve Him in the Christian ministry. The ministry is not a profession, which men may assume of themselves, and which they may lay down when it suits their convenience: it is a *vocation* from Christ, who demands of those on whom He lays His hand life-long service to Himself. St. Paul has beautifully recognised this in the passage cited from the Epistle to the Ephesians:—'But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of *the gift of Christ*. . . . And He *gave* some to be Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers' (iv. 7; 11). But this call of Christ will evince itself in the gifts and graces of those who have received it, and in the spiritual fruit of their preparatory labours; and the act of ordination, as we have seen, recognises the reality of this call, as having approved itself to the Church. All the instructions given to Timothy and Titus respecting the appointment of elders or bishops imply, that the qualifications of those who were to be set apart to this office should be *tested;* and thus when St. Paul, in addressing Timothy, proceeds to speak of the qualifications of deacons, he says, 'And let these *also* first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless' (1 Tim. iii. 10). His emphatic charge to this evangelist is, 'Lay hands hastily on no man' (v. 22).

The *qualifications* of those who should be ordained to the Christian ministry are clearly and fully traced by St. Paul in

his Pastoral Epistles. There is a brief but very comprehensive statement in the second Epistle to Timothy:—'The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also' (ii. 2). Personal faith in the Lord Jesus, the faith which unites the soul to Him, so that it becomes a partaker of His spiritual life,—proved fidelity to the trusts reposed in them in the past,—and an ability to teach, so as to edify the Church of God, are here specified as the qualities which should distinguish those to whom the sacred deposit of Divine truth is to be specially committed. In the first Epistle to Timothy and in that to Titus, the moral and spiritual qualifications of Christian Pastors are dwelt upon at greater length. They are to be distinguished by uniform self-control, so as to avoid all excess in the gratification of their bodily appetites, as well as all manifestations of hasty or irritated feeling,—to be free from the love of money,—to be exemplary in the government of their own households,—to be hospitable and generous, according to their ability,—and to be vigilant in the discharge of all their duties. They must be firmly attached to the doctrine of Christ, and be ready to set it forth and defend it. They must not be novices in the Christian profession, lest they should be lifted up with pride; and they must 'have good testimony from them that are without, lest they fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.'

The *duties* of the Christian pastorate are numerous and important.

1. The first is, *the public declaration and unfolding of the Christian message.*

That message they are to address to the unconverted to lead them to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus, that thus the Church may be enlarged and multiplied. To them is committed 'the word of reconciliation'; and they may say with St. Paul, 'We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us; we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God' (2 Cor. v. 19, 20). To win souls to

the Lord Jesus is the highest privilege and honour which any minister can enjoy.

But Christian Pastors are to unfold the Christian scheme to believers, in its riches of heavenly truth, in the lofty privileges which it sets forth, and in the duties which it enforces; while Christ Himself is the grand theme of their teaching, and the whole system of truth and duty is shown to revolve around Him. The Apostle Paul has indicated his own practice and that of his fellow-labourers in the opening of his Epistle to the Colossians. Having spoken of the 'mystery' which is now disclosed to believers, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory,' he adds, 'Whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ' (i. 28). In the passage of the Epistle to the Ephesians already referred to, he states at greater length the results to which the labours of Christian Pastors should be directed, and he lays particular stress on the perfecting of individual believers, and the building up of the whole Church in the holy harmony and union which would result from the fulness of spiritual life diffused through every member.

2. A second duty devolving on Christian Ministers is *private* and *pastoral teaching*.

Every individual of the flock committed to their charge, or gathered by their instrumentality, is to be to them an object of affectionate solicitude. They are to watch over the souls of their people with sleepless vigilance (Heb. xiii. 17), and to embrace the various opportunities which may be afforded of giving them counsel, instruction, encouragement, or warning. As St. Paul reviewed his ministry of nearly three years in Ephesus, he could say to the elders of that Church, 'I shrank not from declaring any thing that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' (Acts xx. 20. 21).

The pastoral attention of Christian Ministers should be especially given to the afflicted and the poor. It becomes them

to sympathise with sorrow, and to endeavour to lighten its pressure by the manifestation of affection, and by administering the consolations of the gospel. It is a leading feature of Christianity that it takes special notice of the poor, and commends them to the kind consideration of their brethren, and, in particular, of those who are placed in more favoured circumstances. How beautiful is the statement of St. Paul, as to his intercourse with the leading Apostles at Jerusalem :—'Only they would that we should remember the poor, which very thing I was also zealous to do' (Gal. ii. 10)!

3. The *care of the young*, and especially of the children of the members of the Church, is another duty of Christian Pastors.

We have seen that the Lord Jesus affectionately welcomed the little children that were brought to Him for His blessing; and we have argued from His words, 'Of such is the kingdom of God,' that it is His design that the children of His people should grow up within His visible Church, and be trained with a view to their thoughtfully assuming the Christian profession, as soon as they become capable of it. But if so, their religious instruction and culture should be an object of interest not only to their parents or guardians, but to the Pastors of the Church; and both in public and private they should carry out the charge of the risen Saviour to St. Peter, when He formally reinstated him in his Apostolic office :—'Feed My lambs.'

4. It devolves on Christian Pastors to *guide* and *rule* the Church.

Several of the designations given to them, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, imply this; and the very term 'Pastors' includes this idea. They are to be the Shepherds of their people, going before them in holy duty, and caring for the enforcement of the law of Christ, to which they and their people are equally subject. Among the qualifications of those who should be set apart to the office of bishops or elders, St. Paul mentions 'One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity: but if a man knoweth

not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?' (1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.) This argument implies that there is some analogy between the position of a Christian Minister and that of the father of a family, and that it belongs to each to exercise a beneficent rule. In a similar manner he afterwards says, 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching' (v. 17).

The passages now cited illustrate the character of that *rule* in the Church which belongs to the Christian pastorate. Ministers are to 'shepherd' the flock of Christ, caring tenderly for every member of it, even as the ancient shepherds knew their sheep and cared for them, and remembering their responsibility to the Chief Shepherd who watches over all His people. They are not to act arbitrarily, or to do their own will. In the exercise of discipline, the chief responsibility of which rests upon them, though it is right that there should be certain guards against error or prejudice on their part, they are bound simply to carry out the injunctions of Christ. It is a sacred principle, based on the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus over His Church, that *Christian discipline should be simply the application of the law of Christ to particular cases.* This principle should chasten the feelings, and govern the conduct, of all on whom the duty of maintaining the order and purity of the Church devolves. St. Peter's charge to the elders, or bishops, of the Churches to which he wrote is most impressive:—'The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away' (1 Peter v. 1—4).

We have referred to the Apostolical arrangement, that there should be an order of *Deacons* subordinate to the pastors of the Church. The first institution of this office is considered to be recorded in Acts vi. The circumstances of the Church at Jerusalem were such as to render it necessary that the Apostles should be relieved of the charge of administering the temporal affairs of the Church, and seeing that all were properly cared for in the daily ministration; and they called on the disciples generally to select 'seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom,' whom they might appoint to attend to these duties. The seven are not called 'deacons'; but it is generally agreed, that the office which they held was that afterwards so designated. We have seen, too, that St. Paul, in addressing the Church at Philippi, speaks of 'the bishops and deacons'; and in his first Epistle to Timothy he dwells at length on the qualifications necessary to fit men for this office. They were to be grave, thoughtful, and sincere; free from covetousness, and strictly temperate; firmly attached to the doctrine of Christ, and maintaining godly order in their own households.

The duties of deacons are not particularly specified; but the general principle, that the temporal affairs of the Church were confided to their charge, receives light from several intimations found in the Apostolical writings. There was much in the early Churches which required great care and assiduous attention on the part of the office-bearers. With regard to the poor, it should be borne in mind that, in the Apostles' days, there was no public provision made for their support, so that they were cast on the benevolence of the Church. Then, too, provision was made for aged widows; and St. Paul gives particular directions as to those who should be taken into the number of widows to be provided for by the Church, so as to guard this arrangement against abuse (1 Tim. v. 3—16). The analogy of the case would lead us to conclude that aged men who were comparatively destitute, and sick persons were cared for by the Church; and all these things would impose heavy duties on the deacons and deaconesses. Some deacons, too,

possessed the gift of acceptable and useful preaching, and exercised this gift with great advantage to the Churches; but this was not properly a part of the diaconal office. In many cases, the faithful improvement of their talents led to their being placed in a higher office. As an instance of this it may be mentioned, that Philip, who was one of 'the seven,' is referred to as an 'Evangelist' in Acts xxi. 8.

In some Christian communities, and specially in the Wesleyan-Methodist Connexion, the name of 'deacon' is not retained; but some of the duties devolving on the ancient deacons are discharged by the Stewards of the different Societies. In many Churches, also, there are gifted men recognised as Preachers of the word, though not invested with the pastoral office; and their ministrations have been often proved to be powerful and successful.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LORD'S DAY.

IN considering the Institutions of Christianity, we have now to advert to the Christian Sabbath,—the Lord's Day.

As we trace the history of the Sabbatic institution, the first fact that meets us is, that it was ordained immediately after the creation of man, and was intended to commemorate the 'rest' of God, as He viewed this completed terrestrial system, not yet defiled by sin, and pronounced it very good. 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended the work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made' (Gen. ii. 1—3). To man the Sabbath was to be a day of rest, of holy worship, and of abundant spiritual blessing. That it was observed in the patriarchal ages is evident from the distribution of time into weeks, or periods of seven days; and in the narrative of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt we find it recognised and observed before the giving of the law from Mount Sinai. In confirmation of this statement it is sufficient to refer to the sixteenth Chapter of the book of Exodus.

In the legislation of Sinai the observance of the Sabbath as a day of holy rest was inculcated with great solemnity, while the very form of the commandment recognised it as an institution already known and honoured. The importance of the Sabbatic institution, in the Divine estimate, could not be more impres-

sively marked than by its being placed among the great moral precepts of the law,—those precepts which God Himself uttered from amidst the thunders of Sinai, and which are so distinctly appealed to by our Lord and His Apostles as binding upon men.

It is well for us to endeavour to form a vivid conception of the mode of Sabbath-observance in the early period of the Israelitish nation, before the establishment of synagogues, and when the people generally led a pastoral life. The Rev. Dr. Rigg, in his work, 'The Sabbath and the Sabbath Law before and after Christ',—a work marked by great ability and deserving of careful study,—has given an interesting picture of Jewish life in that period:—

'At the beginning of the Sabbath, when the sunset marked the close of the foregoing day, a pleasant stillness reigned throughout all the land of Israel. At every family homestead in that land of homesteads were gathered together for the evening feast of the opening Sabbath all the members of the family, grandsire and grandame, sons and daughters, and daughters-in-law, children and children's children, to the third or even fourth generation. With them, also, but distinguished from them by the place which they occupied, were menservants and maidservants, and possibly "the stranger" who had claimed the benefit of the good man's hospitality. And, seated in honour by the side of the aged head of the household, was often to be found "the Levite within the gates" of the homestead. The feast was frugal, but yet rich in the goodly provisions of pastoral plenty; usually cold, but all the more suitable to the climate and the tastes of the people. On rare occasions, however, a kid which had been made ready before the sunset hour might grace and complete the provisions laid out on some special Sabbath. There were cakes and fruit, and milk and honey; especially the olive, the grape, the fig, and the date, appeared in plenty at the feast. It was to all a season of rest and rejoicing; a season of good cheer. After the feast, we may believe that the Levite oftentimes rehearsed national traditions, recited sacred histories, chanted to his harp sacred songs not

without the accompaniment of maidens and young men, and inculcated the precepts of the Divine law.

'On the morrow there would be seen the family in all its branches enjoying the day according to the manner of their race and the suggestions of the climate. They might be seen early abroad, still keeping, however, within easy hail from home, to lead the oxen or asses to the watering, or to breathe the sweet air of the cool fresh morning; presently they would partake of a forenoon meal answerable in character to that of the previous evening; they may have been led again in prayer or sacred song, and taught again, the younger branches especially, out of "the law of the Lord." We may imagine them in the warm noon reclining under the thick screen of the drooping fig-tree, or the shadow of some great rock, or in the shelter of some cool and hidden valley; the old renewing their youth while they caressed the little ones, or gravely conversing with their mature children, the patriarch with his sons, the aged matron with her daughters and daughters-in-law, all resting from labour, relaxing from care, while family affection expands in the warm and blessed leisure, and the whole household is knit together into close and kindly union; and a sense of the blessings of the national covenant, of the goodliness of the land of promise, of the graciousness and glory of the God of Israel, settles into the heart of all. Such may be taken to have been the character of an Israelitish Sabbath in the earliest times,—the times antecedent to David.'*

The same writer has beautifully traced the influence which the service of praise in the Jewish tabernacle as arranged by David, and afterwards enlarged by Solomon when the temple had been erected, would have on Sabbath-observance throughout the land of Israel:—'After the time of David, not only was there a larger body of sacred history than before, but a noble and pathetic service of prayer and song, for the house of the Lord had been established, the strains of which would not only fill Mount Zion with thanksgiving and the voice of melody, with pleading prayer and lofty praise, but would be echoed and

* Second Edition, pp. 53—55.

re-echoed throughout the land of Israel. The worship of the tabernacle, restored so splendidly by David, and the gorgeous worship of the temple of Solomon, would not only add impressiveness to the great feasts, but must have lifted all that belonged to religious truth and worship into a much higher position before the nation, and have reacted mightily upon the religious faith and devotion of all the tribes. The Sabbaths of the land would catch a glow from the glory of Mount Zion, and would gain greatly in fulness of religious instruction and influence, and in spirituality of character and meaning.'*

The sentiments thus expressed are confirmed by many of the declarations of the ancient prophets, and, in particular, by the remarkable passage in Isaiah lviii. 13, 14:—'If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'

The teaching of our Lord on the subject of the Sabbath claims our reverent attention. He reproved, both by word and act, the rigorous austerities of the Pharisaic sect, which had tended to change the character of the day from one of holy rest, and refreshment of spirit, and cheerful communion with God, to one of bondage to literal rules; and He especially affirmed two principles,—that works of *necessity* are allowable on the Sabbath,—and that works of *kindness* and *mercy* to the bodies and souls of men are in accordance with its sacred character. And in vindicating the conduct of His disciples, on one occasion, against the cavils of the Pharisees, He affirmed a third principle,—that just as the priests in the temple were compelled to do servile work on the Sabbath, in connection with

* 'The Sabbath and the Sabbath Law before and after Christ.' By Dr. Rigg. Pp. 56, 57.

the offering of sacrifice, so they who were in personal attendance upon Himself, and engaged in His immediate service, might do that which was required by that service, though for other purposes it might not be proper.

Two other declarations of our Lord respecting the Sabbath require to be specially mentioned. The former of them referred to the true character of the Sabbath, while it recognised it as an institution designed for man *as man*, and therefore for the whole human family:—'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath' (Mark ii. 27). The latter set forth His own authority over the Sabbatic institution. After referring to the necessary action of the priests in the temple on the Sabbath, He added, 'But I say unto you, that One greater than the temple is here. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. *For the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath*' (Matt. xii. 6—8).

On the principle which He thus affirmed we rest the change of the day of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. We cannot doubt that it was the design of our Lord, in the exercise of the authority which He so distinctly claimed, that under the economy to be established, after His glorification, the first day of the week should be observed by His people as the day of holy rest. The change, of course, could only be gradually introduced. The Christian festival, indeed, of *the Lord's day* was, from the first, observed, as a day of sacred gladness, in commemoration of our Lord's resurrection from the dead; and there are several evidences in the New Testament that on this day believers came together for worship, and instruction, and Christian communion. But when we look at the composition of many of the early Churches, that they consisted largely of Christian Jews, while some of the members were slaves, we perceive that rest from labour on the Lord's day was not, at first, in all cases, possible. It is probable, as Dr. Rigg admits, in his valuable work already referred to, that 'the Christian Jews, at least at first, observed

the Jewish Sabbath after the Jewish mannner; they also kept the Lord's day; and it is not easy to believe that they abstained from labour on both days.' But while Dr. Rigg concedes this, he goes on to say, with great propriety and force, 'Doubtless with the Christian Jews the Sabbath itself must have been changed into a Christian holy day. They would remember the sacrifice, and could not but remember also its acceptance; they would remember the burial during the Sabbath; they could not choose but also remember the resurrection. In a word, the Jewish Sabbath, as that Sabbath could not but be kept by Christian Jews, was changed into a Christian festival, and would prepare them for keeping the Christian Lord's Day. All through its hours they must have been longing for the glad holy day which was to follow; and thus, when the eve of the Sabbath closed, and sunset ushered in the beginning of the first day of the week, they would be prepared to hail with joy its memories and its services, and look forward with longing for the earliest day-break of the resurrection morning. On that day, so long as their Jewish commonwealth remained, and as respects the believing Jews of Palestine at least, they would not abstain from work. But yet it would be a high and holy day from the first, for the services of which they had been prepared by the Sabbath rest. They could not but feel that it was destined to increase, while their Sabbath must decrease; that the rightful inheritance of sanctity and celebration belonged to it, and must come to it. They could not but be led by their spiritual instincts to anticipate that substitution of the Lord's Day for the Jewish Sabbath, with the full rights of inheritance, which could not but follow. In the nature of things, however, this was a matter not to be settled by a decree, but to be determined by a law of inward life and sympathy.'*

The honour placed upon the Lord's day by the Apostles and the first Christians is indicated in several passages of the New Testament; and in estimating the historical evidences of our

* 'The Sabbath and the Sabbath Law before and after Christ.' By Rev. Dr. Rigg. Pp. 73, 74.

religion, it is important to bear in mind the testimony thus afforded to the great fact on which our hopes repose,—that the Lord Jesus came forth from the tomb, the Conqueror of death, and opened to His people the path to eternal life. We find the Christians at Troas coming together on the first day of the week 'to break bread,' and St. Paul preaching to them with earnestness and power (Acts xx. 7); and we find this Apostle writing to the Corinthians, in reference to their Christian assemblies, 'Upon the first day of the week, let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come' (1 Cor. xvi. 2). St. John, also, says in the opening of the Apocalypse, 'I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.' The period of transition to which we have referred did not last long; and before the close of the second century the Lord's day was recognised as the Christian Sabbath. Thus Irenæus writes, 'On the Lord's day every one of us Christians keeps the Sabbath, meditating in the law, and rejoicing in the words of God.'

It is this character—the character of the Christian Sabbath—which we claim for the Lord's day. We hold that the Sabbatic institution, in its essential features, is for all ages and for all mankind. We found this conviction on its primeval appointment,—on the express words of our Lord, 'The Sabbath was made *for man*,'—and on the fact that this institution has a place in the summary of the moral law given, under the most impressive circumstances, by God Himself from Mount Sinai, and written on the two tables of stone which were placed within the ark. The setting apart of one day in seven as a day of rest and worship, as well as of family union, is an eminently benignant arrangement; and it is appalling to think of the state to which this world would be reduced if there were no Sabbath, but the wasting toil and care of ordinary life went on without intermission. And to us, as Christians, it is above all things delightful, to connect the rest and the cheerful intercourse of this holy day with the contemplation and worship of our Risen Lord, whose work of atonement is complete and finished, and

who has entered into His 'rest' as the Head and Forerunner of all His people. To share that 'rest,' and to enjoy an eternal Sabbath amidst the glories of His presence, and the ennobling associations and services of the realms of light and purity, is the hope which sustains us amidst the sorrows and conflicts of this probationary state, and as we succumb to the stroke of the last enemy. The work of life will then be accomplished; and throughout eternity we shall be with HIM who has redeemed and saved us, and who condescends to make us partakers of His victory and joy.

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